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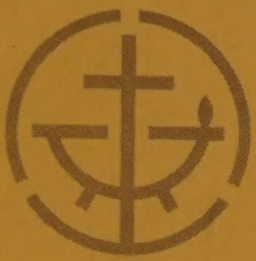

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THE GOVERNING CONFERENCE IN METHODISM

NEELY'S PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICE

JOURNAL OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1792

The Methodist Episcopal Church and its Foreign Missions

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By
THOMAS BENJAMIN NEELY
Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church

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NEW YORK CINCINNATI

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TO
THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL
MISSIONS
IN
SOUTH AMERICA
AND
MY COWORKERS
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PREFACE

The Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in the United States of America, sometimes spoken of briefly as America. This was its birthplace and here was its habitat.

In course of time, having the missionary spirit, the work of this church was extended to foreign countries, so that, at this time, the missions of The Methodist Episcopal Church are found in Europe, Asia, and Africa, and in North, Central, and South America, and also in islands of the seas.

In view of these efforts to spread the gospel, questions have arisen as to the relation of The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America and these foreign missions, and not a few have held differences of opinion, due, in certain instances, to lack of knowledge as to fundamental principles.

Some of these queries have been started anew through inquiries recently propounded by certain bishops in Asia, at a meeting held in Singapore, in the Straits Settlements, on March 15, 1922.

These bishops who were from Korea, China, and various parts of India, at this gathering prepared and adopted "a communication to the Board of Bishops at home," thus noting a distinction between the church at home and the missions abroad, and, at the same time, raising important questions that should be considered by "the

Board of Bishops at home," and also by the entire church.

The present book contains a discussion of points involved in the relation between The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America and its foreign missions, and also of points which relate to the essential organism of the denomination.

It has been for many years the duty and pleasure of the writer to study the history and laws of the church, and also, as a bishop, to interpret the law, but in this book he is not giving an *ex cathedra* opinion, or a formal official decision on the law points involved, or speaking for the Board of Bishops, but submitting his own personal judgment. The facts and arguments will speak for themselves.

THOMAS B. NEELY.

Philadelphia, Pa.
November 22, 1922.

A SYLLABUS OF CHAPTERS

CHAPTER I

THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

In 1784, a new claimant among the churches—Organizing Conference in Baltimore—Christmas time—Unheralded—Troopers from Perry Hall—The Lovely Lane Chapel—The new denomination was an Episcopal Church—The Church of England had departed—The Protestant Episcopal Church had not come—The new Episcopal Church was named The Methodist Episcopal Church—Its relation to John Wesley—The Articles of Religion and the Service Book—Wesley's direct representative was Thomas Coke, D. C. L. —Preceding the organization of The Methodist Episcopal Church was an organized religious body from which it evolved—The formation of the Protestant Episcopal Church—The Reverend Samuel Seabury, of Connecticut—Secured Scotch non-juring consecration as bishop in November, 1784—In September Wesley had set apart Doctor Thomas Coke, and named Francis Asbury, as superintendents, or bishops—Wesley was the supreme head of all Methodism, but the American Methodists, in their Conference, organized themselves —The Methodist Episcopal Church had two bishops before the Protestant Episcopal Church had one in America—Doctor William White, of Philadelphia, and Doctor Provoost, of New York, were consecrated for the latter church on February 4, 1787—Book of Common Prayer for latter Church was adopted in 1789—The Wesley service book called "The Sunday service," etc., was adopted by the Methodist Episcopal Church

in 1784—Wesley meant that reorganized American Methodism should be as like, and as different from, the Church of England, as his Articles of Religion and his Service Book, were as like, and as different from, the Anglican Articles and the English Book of Common Prayer—Small numbers at the beginning of the churches—The Wesleyan Societies in America did not withdraw from the Church of England or the Protestant Episcopal Church—They had not belonged—Origin and resemblances of the new Churches—The Methodist Episcopal Church resembled the Primitive Apostolic Church—Growth of the new Church—The marvelous growth, work, and success of the Methodist Episcopal Church—Leonard Woolsey Bacon—New Problems.

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and everywhere in the United States, and all together could supervise the whole country, but who could not be located outside the United States—It had been affirmed that a general superintendent outside this country suspended his episcopal functions—Bishop Coke—Had to be in the United States of America—The "plan" prohibited the localizing of a general superintendent in the home church—Also prohibited his localization in any foreign field—The law prohibited and the conditions pronounced against it—The home field was homogeneous and a general superintendent might work in any section—In the foreign fields the differences of race, language, and usages prevented such a promiscuous episcopacy—A bishop fit for one place probably would not be fit for another—The general superintendent bishops were for immediate oversight in the United States, where was located the seat of authority—It was felt that the growing mission work in foreign lands needed some kind of direct episcopal supervision—As the general superintendency could not be used there, the church sought some other kind of episcopacy—Doctor John M. Reid and Doctor John T. Gracey in "Methodist Episcopal Missions"—A missionary episcopacy was devised—In 1856 an amendment to the Constitution was proposed by the General Conference permitting missionary bishops—This was duly adopted by the church—A peculiar omission—Its correction—Bishop William L. Harris—Doctor David Sherman—Bishop Edward G. Andrews—Bishop Neely's "Governing Conference"—Missionary Bishops were elected and consecrated—In 1858 Bishop Francis Burns, and in 1866, Bishop John Wright Roberts, colored bishops for Liberia—Now two kinds of episcopacy, the general superintendency for the home field, and the missionary episcopacy for the foreign field—A wise adaptation for

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making different and conflicting regulations!—The General Conference has no right to empower the Central Conference, or any other body, to establish rites and to make a ritual or to translate into the vernacular such parts of the church ritual as it may desire—That means it may omit and discard any part it pleases—The General Conference has no right to authorize the Central Conference to modify any Article of Religion—It cannot do so itself—The ruined Ritual of 1916 is recalled—Loose legislation is dangerous and disruptive—The provision for making courses of study for the ministry conflicts with the work of the General Commission on Courses of Study as set forth in the *Discipline*—It is confusing—There might be six or sixty differing courses in the foreign fields—The bishops who are to approve—Corrected, the Central Mission Conference may prove to be the very organism needed—With more and proper home rule through the Central Conference the mission would not need to send delegates, or as many of them to the United States—This would help satisfy those who cry for reduced expense—This would intensify local development—This is simpler and safer than the plan of "Regional Jurisdictions in Foreign Countries," reported in the intricate scheme presented by the Commission on Unification—Gradual training with ultimate independence is infinitely better.

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THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1920

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an unusually large number of general superintendents, and sent many of them to be residents in foreign mission fields—Missionary bishops were permanent bishops in foreign fields, where time was an important element—Made general superintendents they could be taken from the foreign mission and placed in the United States where their special knowledge and unique experience would be thrown away—The ordinary general superintendent had no such preparation for foreign missionary work—When he did learn he could be brought back to the United States where this acquired knowledge was not needed—The Constitution, law, and usage intended all general superintendents for the United States—The missionary episcopacy was created because the general superintendent could not constitutionally be located in a foreign country—That is the law to-day—The missionary episcopacy is a noble form of the episcopate and has been a great success—Think of Bishop William Taylor and Bishop Joseph C. Hartzell in Africa, and Bishop James M. Thoburn in India, and the other missionary bishops—This does not mean that general superintendents cannot do and have not done monumental work—Bishop Bashford and Bishop Lewis will be recalled, but they practically made themselves missionary bishops by clinging to their field in China—If they had had the previous training of Bishop Thoburn on the foreign mission field, they might have done even better, and they might have done better in the United States—The general superintendents are for and adapted to the United States; the missionary bishops are for and adapted to the foreign mission fields—It may be said that the General Conference has assigned general superintendents to foreign fields —It never did before 1900, when it sent Bishop John H. Vincent to Europe and Bishop David H. Moore to

China—But the Constitution is superior to the General Conference—A mistake or a violation of law by that body does not make a binding precedent, or change the Constitution—The judgment of the General Conference is not final; finality is with the whole church that makes the Constitution—The church had foreign work when it made the Constitution and knew general superintendents could not be located abroad—The Constitution remains the same, and according to "the plan" the Board of Bishops assigns each bishop to his work—It was a fundamental error to locate general superintendents in foreign mission fields—Now difficulties arise in Asia—The cause of the confusion is clear—Correct the error and the commotion will disappear—The missionary episcopacy still exists, and is guarded by the law and the Constitution—The General Conference cannot destroy it—The church should sustain and honor it—The Constitution must be maintained—So-called Negro General Superintendents.

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THE NEXT STEP NOT A FALSE STEP

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CHAPTER I

THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Toward the close of the year 1784 there appeared a new claimant for a place among the many churches that already existed. It had a calm consciousness of its right to be, but its appearance was made with marked modesty. It was organized in the then little town of Baltimore, and during the Christmas week of that year. The coming had not been announced with a blare of trumpets, and the newspaper pages had not been filled with bold advertisements calling the attention of the public to the momentous occasion. Baltimore itself did not appreciate the honor that was being thrust upon it. Some may have wondered at the little cavalcade that one morning rode into the city from the mansion called Perry Hall, a short distance out of town, and others with a momentary interest may have noticed a number of staid-looking men who wended their way to and from a little chapel in Lovely Lane, though the open door may have suggested that some religious event was in progress. Some may have recalled that they had seen a few of these preacher-like men, but most of them were strangers from a distance and from all points of the compass. It was in that little Lovely Lane Chapel that the new denomination was organized in that

Christmas time of seventeen hundred and eighty-four.

Newspaper men from all parts of the land were not present and on the alert to be the first to herald the birth of a new ecclesiasticism, for there were not many enterprising journals, and few, if any, of the editors knew what was about to transpire. When the event did take place the telegraph did not, with lightning rapidity, spread the news far and wide over the land, for the telegraph did not yet exist, and had not been dreamed of. A little local company knew, and a few more, and then it was slowly and surely spread by the post, and by those itinerant preachers, as they rode away in all directions to their distant circuits. They told, and those who heard them told others, and then the press began to impress and publish it, and after awhile the cities, the towns, the villages, the sparsely settled country, and the new frontier beyond the mountains got to know that there was another church; and a little later the whole world knew. It seemed a humble beginning, but it was one of the world's great events.

The new denomination was to be an Episcopal Church, and they so named it, and the records state that the organizers formed an independent Episcopal Church. It was to be an Episcopal Church but not quite like some bodies that called themselves by that title. It was a time for reorganization in the nation and among religious bodies. The struggle for national independence had been a great strain throughout the States

which had been British colonies, but now the War of the Revolution was over, and, just the year before, Great Britain had recognized "The United States of America." With the independence of the country the Church of England had disappeared, and, before that, a large proportion of its clergy had departed from the country. The Church of England had gone, but the Protestant Episcopal Church had not come, but the remains of the old State Church of England were inquiring as to what was best to be done.

The organizers of the new church in 1784 made an Episcopal Church, but to show that it was not just the same as the Church of England, and to distinguish it from other Episcopal Churches, they prefixed the word "Methodist" to "Episcopal," and so made it "The Methodist Episcopal Church," which meant that it was to be an Episcopal Church of the Methodist, or Wesleyan kind. This showed its derivation and linked it with the great evangelistic and ecclesiastical leader, The Reverend John Wesley.

This relation of the new Church to the great Wesley was very direct. Followers of Wesley came to America and soon began to hold religious exercises and form societies such as he had organized in the British Islands. Then Wesley sent missionaries to America, and preachers increased, congregations were gathered, and religious societies were formed in many parts of the country, and to all intents and purposes a church was evolved, the only thing lacking being an ordained

ministry. The independence of the United States having been recognized, Wesley provided the beginning of an ordained ministry, Articles of Religion, and a service book, and sent to America, as his personal representative, the Reverend Thomas Coke, a graduate of Oxford, and a Doctor of Civil Law of the same university, and the reorganization of the American societies as a complete church was effected.

This was prior to the formation of the Protestant Episcopal Church. The Protestant Episcopal Church came up from the fragments of the Church of England that remained after the old Church of England had departed from the new nation, and these remnants were scattered throughout the States and were without any general control or unified government.

On the other hand, The Methodist Episcopal Church was the transformation of a preexisting and organized religious body which had a connectional government covering the States generally, and everywhere a unity with a central body called a Conference, and a personal head who directed the movements of the whole body. It had preachers and places for service, with a recorded membership, and besides an efficient polity, it had well-settled doctrines which were not only preached and taught but also printed, that the public might read and understand. So before it became a complete church it stood forth a compact religious organization, with its own creed, with its preachers, with a thorough and working economy, with its

unified system of government, and a recognized supervising head. All this it had before it became a complete church in 1784, so it did not come out of chaos, and it was not an untested ecclesiastical mechanism. It was in working condition, and had been for years and it needed very little more for it to go on as a working church.

The first meeting of those who had been in the Church of England, that approached what might be understood as a general convention, was held in Philadelphia, in September and October, 1785, but The Methodist Episcopal Church had already been organized in the previous year, about eight months before. At that meeting there were present sixteen clergymen and twenty-six laymen from seven States.

The next convention was held in Philadelphia on the twentieth of June, 1786, when ten of the clergy and eleven laymen were present, and in that convention there was agreed upon "A General Constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America." This was finally ratified in the Convention of 1789.[1]

The clergy and laity in the State of Connecticut selected the Reverend Doctor Samuel Seabury to be bishop, and he went to England to secure consecration from the bishops of the Church of England, but failing to secure consecration in the line of the English succession, he turned to the Scotch non-juring bishops, and by

[1]Bird Wilson, D.D.: *Life of Bishop White*, Philadelphia, 1839, p. 106.

them was consecrated in November, 1784; but about two months before that, in September, Wesley had set apart the Reverend Doctor Thomas Coke, and had named him and Francis Asbury to be superintendents, or bishops, for the new organization in America. Wesley was the Supreme head of all Methodism and whatever he did was considered final; but the American Methodists, in their own Conference in December, 1784, organized themselves and elected Coke and Asbury bishops. With that, personal control passed into Conference government.

Bishop Seabury had back of him his co-religionists of his own state, for the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States had not yet taken full form. Some questioned the validity of his consecration, as he was not consecrated by the regular English bishops, but he was recognized as a bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Bishop Seabury returned to the United States in 1785, landing at Newport, Rhode Island, on the twentieth of June, and reached New London, Connecticut, on the twenty-seventh of the same month.

In 1784, however, the organizing Conference in Baltimore had elected Doctor Coke and Francis Asbury, so that The Methodist Episcopal Church had two bishops before the Protestant Episcopalians had one bishop in the United States.

Later Doctor William White, of Philadelphia, and Doctor Provoost, of New York, were selected for the episcopate in the Protestant Episcopal Church. They went to England, and, on Sunday,

February 4, 1787, they were consecrated by one bishop and two archbishops of the Church of England.

The *Book of Common Prayer* for the Protestant Episcopal Church was adopted in 1789, while the Wesley Service Book, called by him *The Sunday Service . . . With Other Occasional Services,* and which was based on the *Book of Common Prayer* of the Church of England, was adopted by The Methodist Episcopal Church in 1784.

Both bodies were Episcopal Churches, and both The Methodist Episcopal Church and The Protestant Episcopal Church were, like the nation, of English descent, and both came in the succession from the Church of England, and Wesley evidently intended that his reorganized societies in America should take the place in the new republic of the Church of England which he understood had departed from the United States. So he revised for them the English *Prayer Book* and the English Articles of Religion, reducing the thirty-nine Articles to twenty-four.

Wesley meant that the new church that came from his reorganized societies in America should preserve characteristics of the historic Church of England, and he meant that the new church should be as like the Anglican Church, and as different from it, as his twenty-four Articles of Religion were as like, and as unlike, the thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, and as his service book was as like, and as unlike, as the old English *Prayer Book,* and the agreements and the dis-

agreements are so marked that to the student they give a clear revelation of his meaning.

One who recalls the history of these beginnings will probably be impressed by the comparatively small number of persons who took part in the making of the new church. In the first gathering, in 1785, of those who were seeking to form the Protestant Episcopal Church there were sixteen clergymen and twenty-six laymen, and, in the second, in 1786, there were ten of the clergy and eleven of the laity, while at the Christmas Conference of 1784, when The Methodist Episcopal Church was formed, there were "nearly sixty preachers present."[1]

It looks small, but then, we must remember that it is one man, or a few men, by whom almost every good human institution has been started, and the fact is illustrated by both these organizations under consideration.

Now and then the statement has been made that the Methodist societies in America that formed The Methodist Episcopal Church withdrew from the Church of England, or from the Protestant Episcopal Church, in order to do so.

That, however, must be a misapprehension, for, when The Methodist Episcopal Church was formed, the Protestant Episcopal Church had not yet been organized, and the societies could not withdraw from that which had no existence. Then the American Methodist societies could not with-

[1]Thomas B. Neely: *The Governing Conference in Methodism*, New York, 1892, p. 261.

draw from the Church of England, for the English State Church had itself withdrawn from the country and the societies could not withdraw from that which was not there and which did not exist there.

Further, such a withdrawal of the societies was impossible, for these societies never belonged to the Church of England and never were under its control. They were independent, and no bishop or convocation ever exercised authority over them, and the same was true of Wesley's societies in Great Britain.

The two churches, The Methodist Episcopal Church and the Protestant Episcopal Church, giving their chronological order, started out on their careers almost at the same time.

The Protestant Episcopal Church had among many the prestige of the Church of England with which its clergy and its churches had been connected, while The Methodist Episcopal Church had the inheritance of the test of nearly fifty years of a practical and efficient ecclesiasticism which had been devised by John Wesley, one of Oxford University's greatest graduates, who was aided by some of the greatest scholars of the day. Tested in Great Britain, the system was brought to the American side of the Atlantic.

Both churches showed their origin and revealed the survival of their heritage, and the Protestant Episcopal Church began a noble career, and The Methodist Episcopal Church went forth to unparalleled achievements.

There were other external signs that showed a common origin. Passing from a Protestant Episcopal Church in that day to a Methodist Episcopal Church, one would have seen the clergy, as in the other church, arrayed in clerical gowns, for like Wesley himself, Bishop Coke and Bishop Asbury, and other preachers of the young Methodist Episcopal Church wore the gown, as did the clergy of the Church of England, though they did not in their attire carry out all the Anglican details.

So in both churches one would have found a liturgy, the one using the Protestant Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer,* based upon the English *Common Prayer,* and in The Methodist Episcopal Church, Wesley's *Sunday Service,* also based upon the same Church of England *Book of Common Prayer.* Thus, in Philadelphia, if he had gone to Christ Church on Second Street, and then to old Saint George's, on Fourth Street, he would have found that the churches of both denominations had their Morning and Evening Prayer, and that they both had read prayers.

When The Methodist Episcopal Church first began to rise above the horizon, its light may have seemed faint, and to many looked so small that the casual observer had not thought it possible that, in the ecclesiastical firmament, it ever would rise to a star of the first magnitude, but its sponsors were men of faith who believed in God and in this church.

To some the new church was a unique body for

that day, but it carried their thoughts back to the day when the early Church of Christ met in the upper room in Jerusalem, and the thoughtful observer could have seen that this young church bore a striking resemblance to the primitive church of the apostles' time in doctrine, in general organization and in polity, and especially in its simple idea of the episcopacy. It was like a restoration of the early church.

The marvelous growth of this young church has been, and still is, very impressive. From its small beginning The Methodist Episcopal Church with the other members of the Methodistic family, now constitute the largest body of Protestants in the United States. Taking this fact with its many Christian activities, it is no wonder that Doctor Leonard Woolsey Bacon, of the Congregational Church, in his *History of American Christianity* (p. 198), has said: "By far the most momentous event of American Church history in the closing period of the colonial era was the planting of The Methodist Episcopal Church."

In its career in the United States and in other lands the influence of The Methodist Episcopal Church has been very great, and history will pronounce the work of this Church a marked success; but every success brings a new strain and starts new problems. As a consequence, new questions are presented from time to time, and some of them we must attempt to answer.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

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When vital questions relating to any ecclesiasticism are propounded it ought to be plain to any intelligent mind that they cannot be properly answered without an accurate understanding of the essential nature of the ecclesiastical organism to which reference is made.

This may mean a more or less thorough study of the history of the body and an analysis of its organization, for nothing could be more dangerous than to proceed as though the church had no past and that in the present it was not bound by any principles formulated, or contracts made, in that past. Constitution and contract come from the past and control in the present in all constitutional governments whether civil or ecclesiastical, and, generally speaking, the past gives answer to questions of the present.

These principles are just as true of The Methodist Episcopal Church as of any other organization, and more important to the church, because of its sacred character, than to any secular government. Indeed, the matter of common honesty in faithfully keeping the contracts of constitution, law, and established usage applies much more strongly to the church. So the church of the present is held under bonds by the past, and noth-

ing could be more perilous than to answer the questions of the present from momentary impulse or what seems to be present expediency. That method leads to wild revolution and certain disaster, and legislation which discards the obligations that have come from the past is the blighting shadow of anarchy.

Such inquiries as have been indicated throw us back upon fundamental facts as to the nature of the church and its polity, and compel a consideration of the philosophy of the ecclesiastical system, in order to ascertain its capabilities and possibilities, and to learn its restraining limitations.

In this connection we should also consider some phrases that have crept into common, or at least occasional, use which need more careful scrutiny than they have received, for they are not in the organic law of the church, and, when they get into popular use, they may seriously mislead those who are influential in ecclesiastical councils and do great injury to the church itself. One of these expressions is the phrase "a world-church." Thus some say The Methodist Episcopal Church has become "a world-church," because of its missionary work in foreign countries.

The expression may mean much or little according to the intention of the individual who uses it, but it has no settled and precise meaning, and many who employ it have no consistent definition or purpose in its use, and no consistent or adequate idea as to its implications. The Methodist Episcopal Church is somewhere but not every-

where in the world, and, of course, it is not a world-church in the sense of being a universal ecclesiasticism ruling everywhere in the world.

In the common use of the expression, "world-church," the logical implication is something repellent to the prevailing conceptions of local liberty and self-determination.

In a democratic sense, a world government, in which the church controls everywhere, means a church which is, or will be governed sooner or later, by the world. Thus, if it refers to a church in the United States, it means, or, probably, leads to the time when the people of Africa, Asia, Europe, and other peoples in the western hemisphere, with their diverse training and variant views, will dominate the mother church in the United States, by their large and growing number of representatives in its councils. In other words, with the democratic idea, a world-church means that the people from various parts of the world will dominate the original organization. To rule the world means, sooner or later, that the world will rule it, for the world is larger than any one country.

Whatever may be meant by a world-church or a world-wide church, it is plain that The Methodist Episcopal Church is essentially no more a world-church than it was a generation ago, and that there is no recent organic change that calls for, or compels, a special or general modification in this relation in our church economy.

The essential nature of the church is not some-

thing that can be radically changed by a passing emotion, or by a mistake, or an illegal act, or by anything done in ordinary legislation, and it may be said that no radical organic change has been made in the nature of the church in recent times, and certainly not for at least fifty years. If preaching the gospel outside the United States of America makes the church a world-church in 1923, then it was a world-church in 1823, for at that date its ministers were preaching beyond the national boundaries in Canada. But it takes more than the preaching of the gospel in the outlying world to make a world-church. Some of the recent demands are based upon misconceptions which have grown out of hasty legislation, or hasty administration which could not legally change the organic quality of the church, and also from a forgetfulness of the fact that even ordinary legislation cannot change the nature of a constitutionally organized body. Blunders from lack of knowledge, or illegal or unconstitutional acts of any sort do not establish a binding precedent. Show the law or cite the constitution to the contrary and at once they fall.

The Methodist Episcopal Church has planted Christianity, and preached the gospel in various parts of the world, but the idea that these growing foreign missions should be governed forever by a church in the United States of America, or that the church itself should be governed by the foreign missions, was never taught and maintained by The Methodist Episcopal Church, but has been

denied by the history and practice of the church. Further, it is not only contrary to sound economic principles, but also repugnant to the natural rights of racial, national, and local consciousness.

When Wesley sent his first missionaries across the Atlantic to what he regarded as the Southern colonies of North America, it was an American movement, and the very first entry in the English Wesleyan Minutes, covering the assignments of preachers to that section of the west coast of the Atlantic Ocean, later called "The United States of America," was "America—Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor," who were Wesley's first missionaries to America.

So the colonies in that section were spoken of as "America," and the people were called Americans, even before the independence of the new republic was acknowledged, before the Declaration of Independence was proclaimed, and even before the War of the Revolution. In the debates in the British Parliament, in those early times the inhabitants were referred to as "The Americans." Wesley's mission was for "America" and "The Americans," and his first missionaries in this new country recognized the fact that they were in the United States of America to work for America and the Americans.

In the Minutes of the first Annual Conference of the preachers, on this side of the Atlantic, which was held in 1773, in the city of Philadelphia, there is used the expression "in America." Thus a question is recorded as to those "who labor in

connection with Mr. Wesley in America," and there is a notation which says "none of the preachers in America," all of which shows the American intention and character of the organization which had been started by Wesley and his followers.

In a similar way it can be shown that The Methodist Episcopal Church which grew out of those early societies and Conferences was, is, and always has been an American church. Wesley shows this, in a very marked manner, in the preparations which he made for the reorganization of the American societies in 1784.

His circular letter, dated Bristol, (England,) September 10, 1784, was addressed "To Doctor Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our Brethren in North America." That he meant the part which had become independent, is shown when, in that letter, he says: "Many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from the mother country." Then in the testimonial letter which Wesley gave to Thomas Coke, D.C.L., after he had set him apart, Wesley said, "I, John Wesley, think myself to be providentially called, at this time, to set apart some persons for the work of the ministry in America." This was written on the "second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-four." It was all done for America, which meant the new republic.

In the title-page of his service book Wesley printed, "*The Sunday Service of the Methodists*

in North America. With Other Occasional Services." This was printed in Bristol, England, about the same time he published the other documents relating to the reorganization of the American societies, and he meant them for what he had already called "America." The Preface was dated, Bristol, September 9, 1784.

When the Americans had the second edition of this book printed, in 1786, they changed the title by striking out "in North America," and inserting "in the United States of America," the legal title of the country, so as to show just what was meant by the words in the original title.

When The Methodist Episcopal Church was formed, toward the close of 1784, it was styled "The Methodist Episcopal Church in America." That is the title in the *Discipline* of the organizing Conference, which was printed in 1785. So in 1787 we find "in America," but that meant "The United States of America." Thus it is plain that The Methodist Episcopal Church was intended to be a church in, and for, America, or the United States of America.

In 1789, among the questions in the *Book of Discipline* we find this one: "Who have been elected by the unanimous suffrages of the General Conference to superintend the Methodist connexion in America?" but, in 1790, "Methodist connexion in America" is changed to the "Methodist Episcopal Church in America" and this also appears in 1792. "Connexion" was an old form which had persisted, but as time went on the old habit

became weaker, and the new and later legal forms came into familiar use.

So a little later, as the people settled down to a common and more exact familiarity with the legal title of the new nation, they became more exact in language, and, instead of merely saying "America," they said "The United States of America," and the church was not merely "The Methodist Episcopal Church in America," but "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America," one being the equivalent of the other, and both meaning the same country and the new American nation. So when Bishops Coke and Asbury waited on President Washington with the address from the American Conference, the first President referred to them as "Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America."

The work was for "America," and the Methodist Episcopal Church was established as "The Methodist Episcopal Church in America," or "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America," in harmony with the full title of the nation, and both meant the same thing, and indicated that the new organization was an American church, "in America," or "in the United States of America."

Settled usage fixed the association with the name of the nation and the complete title took its place in legal forms so that when the "Chartered Fund"[1] was incorporated it embodied the full

[1]General Conference *Journal*, 1796, pp. 20-22.

title "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America," and the purpose of this fund was therein stated to be "for the relief and support of the itinerant, superannuated, and worn-out ministers and preachers of The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, their wives and children, widows, and orphans." This fund, which still continues, was established in 1796, and was incorporated in Philadelphia, according to the laws of Pennsylvania, in 1797. The money of "The Preachers' Fund," which originated in 1784, was merged into the Chartered Fund.

In the same year, namely, 1796, "the form of a Deed of Settlement" for the conveyance of church property was adopted, and in it the full title of the denomination was used, that is to say, "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America." Thus the form recites that "unto them the said . . . and their successors in office for ever in trust, that they shall erect and build or cause to be erected and built thereon, a house or place of worship for the use of the members of The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, according to the rules and discipline which from time to time may be agreed upon and adopted by the Ministers and Preachers of the said Church at their General Conference in the United States of America," etc.[1]

In 1864, the trust clause was modified to read: "In trust that said premises shall be used, kept,

[1]General Conference *Journal*, 1796, pp. 12-15.

maintained, and disposed of as a place of Divine worship for the ministry and membership of The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, subject to the Discipline,'"[1] etc.

This meant there was seen in the early days, as in 1796, the importance of putting into legal documents the full legal title of the denomination, and so the form ordered was "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America." It was an American church and of the United States of America, and the American character of the church was further emphasized by specifying that the trustees and their successors shall be subject "to the rules and discipline which from time to time may be agreed upon and adopted by the Ministers and Preachers of the said Church at their General Conferences in the United States of America," which means not only that it is an American church, but also that its seat of authority is in, and must be in "The United States of America."

That title "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America" was in legal documents, was in the trust clause of church deeds, and to this day that title stands in title deeds to church property amounting to many millions of dollars.

The history of the development of the title of the church is exceedingly interesting. The phrasing varied, but always meant the same thing. The church was to be in America and to be

[1]General Conference *Journal*, 1864, p. 267. See *Discipline*, 1864, pp. 266, 267, 269.

an American church. Seeing their American colonies suddenly becoming a nation, it is not surprising that British people were at first a little confused and indefinite when they had to name the new country. Wesley, an Englishman, three thousand miles away, wrote to "our Brethren in North America" and called them "our American brethren," and referred to the fact that "many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from their mother country, and erected into independent States."[1] Bishop Coke, another Englishman, doubtless had something to do with the early titles of the church, and so had Bishop Asbury, a born Englishman who had become an American. In the same way colloquialisms had variations, but in course of time the same usage became common.

They all, however, looked upon the country as America, then more precisely as the United States, and then more fully, and exactly correct, as the United States of America; and so, it was The Methodist Episcopal Church in America, The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, and The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, the full title, which, when put into the legal documents, had the sanction of the decrees of the courts, and used on an historic occasion had the approbation of the first President of the republic.

It is also worth recalling that the full title was used as the formal beginnings of General Confer-

[1]Circular Letter of September 10, 1784.

ence *Journals*. Thus in the *Journal* of 1812 the opening is "The delegated General Conference of The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America," and so in 1816. In 1832 it read "A General Conference of The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America." Such was the full title, but some secretaries have used abbreviations. It will be of interest to recall that the title of the Protestant Episcopal Church is "The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America," and the title of the Presbyterian Church is "The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America." They also were American churches, and, like The Methodist Episcopal Church, carry the fact in their titles.

In this era, particularly, to be an American church means very much. Though there is no union of church and state, nevertheless the great growth and steady progress of the United States of America makes an impressive background for all of its denominations, and formally or informally, becomes a powerful protection for their Christian enterprises at home and abroad. As in other matters, many reckon the American church as meaning the best ecclesiasticism, and they assume it reflects the freedom and aggressiveness of the land from which it comes. In the world of to-day it is something to be an American, and it is something to be an American church.

For that and other reasons there was and is a great value in blending the national name with the specific title of the church, as in the case of

"The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America." At home it is not an alien church, and abroad it is under the protecting shadow of the wing of the American eagle. To be an American church means very much to an American church in the home land, and, in a foreign land, it means very much more, for even the foreigner sees, looming up behind it, great and beneficent "America," which, with her growing numbers and increasing might, has gone to the relief of other nations in their dire distress. This is no time for a church to carelessly throw aside its Americanism or to treat lightly or indifferently its American affiliation. For a guide in its own affairs The Methodist Episcopal Church needs to remember that it is an American church, and, as a matter of common historic honesty, it must remember and say that it is "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America."

The recent tendency to abbreviate the title of the church is to be deprecated. Colloquially, of course, the human tendency is toward brevity, and, so, it was and is easier to say "The Methodist Episcopal Church," than "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America." They both were intended to mean the same thing, for "The Methodist Episcopal Church" was "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America." That is what it is in fact, in history, and in law.

To use the shorter title colloquially might be

harmless, but, when it comes to formal documents and supposedly accurate legislation, there is danger that it may be carried too far, and recent omissions of the full title in General Conference deliverances may lead to misconceptions that will tend to injure the denomination and cause serious loss, though the courts will endeavor to ascertain what was intended. However, the General Conference is not supreme in everything, and these errors do not make void the aforementioned facts, and, especially, the great fact that "The Methodist Episcopal Church" is an American church. Still the tendency to change old phrasing has been carried to a very dangerous extreme, and should not be attempted by any one who has not a thorough knowledge of the law and its history, and respect for the same. Just as "The United States" is the abbreviated title of this country, the full title being "The United States of America," so "The Methodist Episcopal Church" is the contracted form of "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America."

There are other "United States" in various parts of the world, but there is only one "United States of America." That is what distinguishes it, and it is "America," and its people are Americans, just as in "The United States of Mexico" the people are Mexicans, and, as in "The United States of Brazil," they are Brazilians. People may speak of "The United States," and not be misunderstood in this country, but not so everywhere. The real and legal title is "The United

States of America," and people may speak of "The Methodist Episcopal Church," or "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States" and not be misunderstood in some places, but the full title is, "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America," and this should be used in law and in dignified utterance.

Another interesting and illuminating fact is that the new American church promptly severed its relation to Wesley and the mother organization in Great Britain, and in this way specially emphasized its character as a purely American church.

At the beginning in 1784 and 1785, as is shown in the first *Discipline* (1785, p. 3) the founders of the new church, desiring to continue some form of connection with Wesley, the founder of Methodism, passed at the organizing Conference an act in which they said: "During the life of the Reverend Mr. Wesley, we acknowledge ourselves his sons in the Gospel, ready, in matters belonging to Church government, to obey his commands; and we do engage after his death to do everything that we judge consistent with the cause of religion in America, and the political interest of these States, to preserve and promote our union with the Methodists in Europe."[1] This was the outburst of a warm filial and fraternal spirit amid the enthusiasm of the new church "in America," but, in a very short time, influential preachers con-

[1] *Discipline*, 1785, p. 3, quoted in Lee's *History of the Methodists*, 1810, p. 95.

cluded that they had said too much and had taken too great a risk, and in a little over two years the Conference of 1787 canceled the agreement.

Fault was found with Asbury on this account. In reply he wrote: "And why was I thus charged? Because I did not establish Mr. Wesley's absolute authority over the American connection. For myself, this I had submitted to, but the Americans were too jealous to bind themselves to yield in all things relative to church government. Mr. Wesley was a man they had never seen—was three thousand miles off—how might submission in such a case be expected?"

Asbury also said: "I never approved of that binding minute. I did not think it practical expediency to obey Mr. Wesley at three thousand miles distance in all matters relative to church government."[1]

The new church was a self-governing American church and even its intense love for Wesley, the founder, would not permit any dictation, or government, coming from outside "America." It was an American church, and it has always remained "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America."

Another very conclusive evidence that The Methodist Episcopal Church is an American church is found in the Twenty-third Article of the Articles of Religion which article was framed and adopted by the organizing Conference of 1784,

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[1]Letter in Atkinson's *Centennial History*, p. 56.

readopted in the new Constitution of 1900, and still remains as originally drafted.

The article is as follows:

"XXIII. *Of the Rulers of the United States of America.*

"The President, the Congress, the General Assemblies, the Governors, and the Councils of State *as the Delegates of the People,* are the Rulers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made to them by the Constitution of the United States, and by the Constitutions of their respective States. And the said States are a sovereign and independent Nation, and ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction."[1] This shows most conclusively that The Methodist Episcopal Church at its very organization recognized its relation to the republic called the United States of America. It was The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, and it recognized and supported this government, and had no such relation to any other political government in the world, and, as this Article has always stood among its Articles of Religion, as it does now, it has always had, and now has, the same peculiar relation to this country and is The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, and emphasis is given to the fact by classing the declaration as an Article of Religion. It will be observed that the Article speaks of the nation as "the United States

[1] *Discipline,* 1920, ¶ 23, Constitution, Art. xxiii.

of America'' and also uses the abbreviated and colloquial form of ''the United States.''

Thus it is clearly shown that the ecclesiastical organization commonly known as The Methodist Episcopal Church is an American church. It is such historically, by its own law and by civil law, and by its Constitution, and, particularly, by that part of its Constitution entitled the Articles of Religion; and so guarded is this feature of its nature that even its General Conference cannot change it either in form or fact.

The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America always has been, and now is, an American church.

CHAPTER III

FOREIGN MISSIONS

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FOREIGN MISSIONS

CHRIST'S command to his early disciples, the nucleus of the Christian Church, was not only to "Go preach and 'teach,'" but "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," (Mark 16. 15), "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28. 19).

The primitive church of the New Testament times, especially under the inspiration and example of the apostles, endeavored literally to obey Christ's injunction, and Christianity was carried into every then known continent, and the foundations of the Church of Christ were laid in Asia, Africa, and Europe.

The movement was characterized by promptness, persistence, and fidelity, and the results were not only marvelous but also miraculous.

Through the succeeding centuries the Christian Church has never entirely forgotten the great commission, and, though there have been fluctuations in energy and sacrifice, the work has been going on so that the gospel has been preached in every land, and to the uttermost parts of the earth, and almost everywhere Christianity is recognized as a mighty force.

Wesleyanism, or Methodism, with its evangelistic impulse, had naturally the missionary instinct to go where the Christian religion was not, and, hence, Methodism spread throughout the British Islands, and soon found its way across the Atlantic Ocean to the new continent.

In turn The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America manifested the same spirit. Its first duty was to spread the gospel throughout the United States, which itself was steadily and rapidly growing.

At a very early period "The Methodist Episcopal Church in America," or in "The United States of America" looked beyond the boundaries of "The United States of America" with a helpful heart and a missionary spirit, and went out and founded Christian missions in other countries. Indeed, at the Conference which organized the Church, in 1784, Freeborn Garrettson and James O. Cromwell were sent as missionaries to Nova Scotia, and Jeremiah Lambert was sent to Antigua, in the West Indies. Then, in a little time, contact with Canada and Canadians caused the work to overlap the northern border, and Methodist Episcopal preachers were found preaching the gospel truth in British territory. In a few years, an extensive work under the auspices of "The Methodist Episcopal Church" grew up in Canada. These foreign missions, however, did not destroy, or modify, the fact that "The Methodist Episcopal Church" was "The Methodist Episcopal Church in America" or "in the

United States of America." It was still an American church.

By 1828 the Canadian work had become independent and The Methodist Episcopal Church was without work beyond the limits of the United States.

This condition, however, lasted only a short time, for, in 1833, a mission was established in Liberia, which was a sort of extension of the United States of America, for the benefit of colored colonists from America. This has been regarded as the first foreign mission of The Methodist Episcopal Church. The mission in South America was begun in 1836. Then, in 1847, a mission was begun in China, with headquarters in Foochow.

From these beginnings the missions of The Methodist Episcopal Church have spread far and wide in all the continents except Australia, and to very distant points. In Japan it established mission work, which now has become an independent church, but continues to aid the work in that country. It has missions in Korea. In China it has seven Conferences, and in the Fukien Province there are three Conferences. In India there are nine Conferences. In Southeastern Asia there are missions in the Philippine Islands, in Malaysia, and in the Netherlands Indies. In Europe there are missions in Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark; in Italy, France, Spain, Bulgaria, and Jugo-Slavia; in North Germany, South Germany, Switzerland, Austria, the Baltic

Countries, Russia, and Hungary. In Africa there are missions in North Africa, in Angola, the Congo, Rhodesia, Liberia, and in Southeast Africa. In the western hemisphere, the church has missions in Mexico, in Central America, and in South America. In South America there are missions in Panama, in Peru, in Chile, in Argentina, and in Uruguay, with two points on the Amazon River.

The Methodist Year Book for 1922 gives the membership of these missions as follows: Africa, 19,635; Eastern Asia, including China and Korea, 96,909, with no report from the Japan Mission Council; Southern Asia, embracing India and Burma, 260,825; Southeastern Asia, including Singapore and the Philippines, 62,015; Europe, without North Africa, 81,373; Mexico and Central America, 8,913; and South America, 12,407, making a total of 542,077 members; and these figures show an increase for Africa, of 1,279; Eastern Asia, of 5,071; Southern Asia, of 13,100; Southeastern Asia, of 2,090; Europe, of 3,572; Mexico and Central America, of 1,612; and South America, of 1,085, making a total increase for the preceding year of 27,809 members in all these foreign missions.

For these foreign missions the following amounts were distributed in 1920:[1]

To China	$1,034,299 23
To Japan	211,665 32
Korea	176,558 19
India and Burma	1,009,791 57

[1] *The Methodist Year Book*, 1922, pp. 111, 112.

Southeastern Asia—	
Malaysia	$126,965 69
Netherlands Indies	51,712 64
Philippines	104,670 62
South America and Mexico	881,085 23
Africa	255,785 95
Europe and North Africa	648,510 82
War Emergency and Reconstruction	1,153,656 81
Retired Missionaries, Incidental Expenses, and other Unassigned Expenditures	161,698 66
Making a total of	$5,816,400 73

To this are to be added the contributions of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society.

These facts give us an outline view of the foreign missions of The Methodist Episcopal Church. In the last eighty-nine years they have spread to, and into, all the great continents and into the insular possessions or holdings of the United States of America, and the foreign membership is reported to be over five hundred and forty-two thousand. Into these foreign fields the Church, in a single year, 1920, through the General Board of Foreign Missions, poured nearly six millions of dollars, which, it should be said, however, was considerably above the average annual appropriation, and came mainly from a special effort.

From the statistics for the year ending December 1, 1921, it appears that the gain in membership was twenty-seven thousand eight hundred and nine (27,809). It should be said, however, that this increase has been surpassed in some other years. Nevertheless, it is probable that some will regard the gain for the year as disappointing in

view of the total membership, the number of workers, and the amount of money expended.

It should be remembered that, while it is natural that a fair return for the effort, the workers, and the money expended, is to be expected, and, in a sense, may be demanded, there are many things in changing conditions on the field, that may account for fluctuations in the annual outcome.

This sketch shows in a general way the work of The Methodist Episcopal Church in foreign lands. It indicates the location of the foreign mission fields, the size of the missions, their progress, and their expense to the mother church, and this survey naturally raises many questions that are perfectly legitimate, and which must be answered either by the questioner himself or by those who have the right vision and the necessary facts. These inquiries will come both from those in the home church and those in the foreign field, and, naturally, the questions will take color from the direction and the environment from which they come.

In the foreign mission the worker may ask about the probability of an early increase in the corps of missionaries from the home land, and the increase of missionary money from the same source, while in the home church the lover of missions may wonder how the foreign demand can be met in view of financial conditions and the pressing necessities of the church in the United States. In the moment of depression, as he considers the

little mission in the midst of the many millions of a long-entrenched heathendom, he may wonder whether if the home church sent all its money it would succeed in converting all these immense masses; but then he recovers, as he remembers the command of Christ to "Go into all the world," and perceives that all is not to be done in a day, but that the gospel is to gradually leaven the whole lump.

At the same time those charged with the management of the vast affairs of the missionary boards may consider whether, after the churches have responded with astonishing liberality, and through the course of years, to a special appeal, it is not good policy and righteous rightwiseness, to relax the strain and resume a proper normalization in the askings.

Then the observer in the home church may view this great family of churches, dotting the whole world, with members who belong to diverse races, speak many different languages, and have back of them various histories, and some with very ancient and great civilizations; and, as he views them, he may feel like the parent of a large family, and wonder whether the children will stay under the old roof tree or go out and make their own way in the world.

On the other hand, in the church of the foreign land, some may be asking when their own people will hold the highest offices, and when they will govern themselves and direct their own affairs, and whether it would not be better to become a

native church, even if it meant greater and long-continued financial sacrifices for themselves.

Doubtless these and many other questions are passing through the minds of many equally devoted lovers of the church both at home and abroad. While quite from the beginning the home church has had its foreign missions, the church "in the United States of America" has always made a distinction between the foreign missions and the home field. The status of the foreign mission was not just the same as that of the home church. Thus it has held that its territory within the home field, "in the United States of America," must be held intact, but it has admitted the right of territory in foreign missions, and the right of foreign missions themselves, to be set off, and made independent. Thus it consented to the independence of the work in Canada, on the ground that those of the church in Canada were under a foreign jurisdiction, and, therefore, could not be held by the American church. Likewise the same principle is found in the independence conceded to the missions of the church which were in Japan.

The case of Canada came up in the General Conference of 1828, on a memorial from the Canadian Conference asking for independence, and the General Conference adopted a report including the following: "Whereas the Canada Annual Conference, situated in the province of Upper Canada, under a foreign government, have, in their memorial, presented to this Conference the difficulties under which they labour in consequence of their

union with a foreign ecclesiastical government, and setting forth their desire to be set off as a separate church establishment; and whereas, this General Conference disclaim all right to exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction under such circumstances, except by mutual agreement"—[1] etc.

This shows that the status of the foreign mission was different from the home church in the United States of America. In the United States the General Conference could not separate and make independent a Conference or Conferences, but it could the mission or Conference in a foreign land, under a foreign jurisdiction or government.

Nathan Bangs, D.D., in his *History of The Methodist Episcopal Church,*[2] tells also how Doctor John Emory, afterward bishop, showed "that the compact between us and our brethren in Canada was altogether of a voluntary character—we had offered them our services and they had accepted them—and therefore, as the time had arrived when they were no longer willing to receive or accept of our labors and superintendence, they had a perfect right to request us to withdraw our services, and we the same right to withhold them." But in the United States this could not be done, for there The Methodist Episcopal Church was an American church for the whole country and without competition with any foreign jurisdiction, and here the government would protect its title as The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States

[1] General Conference *Journal*, 1823, p. 338.
[2] New York, 1840, vol. iii, p. 391.

of America and no one could organize a rival church under its title. Because The Methodist Episcopal Church was an American church in and for the whole United States of America it could not alienate its territory within the bounds of its nation, and because it was an American church the General Conference of 1828 said that, as Canada was "under a foreign government," it disclaimed "all right to exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction under such circumstances, except by mutual agreement," and so it consented to the independence of its Canadian Conference.

The converse was involved in the proposition on the part of certain Southern Conferences to withdraw from The Methodist Episcopal Church in the 'forties, and, regarding the right of such Annual Conferences to withdraw and of the General Conference to sever United States territory from The Methodist Episcopal Church, the General Conference of 1848 rendered a decision in which it said, "nor has the said General Conference, or any individual, or any number of individuals, any right, constitutional or otherwise, to extend official sanction to any act tending directly or indirectly to the dismemberment of the Church."[1]

Further, that General Conference practically and actually held that, though a convention had met and organized a new church, no territory had been detached, or transferred, from the Methodist Episcopal Church, but that members had left the church, and, so, they finally said: "We regard

[1]General Conference *Journal*, 1848, p. 164.

those who have, by their own act and deed, become members of The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, as having withdrawn from The Methodist Episcopal Church. And whereas those who are members of The Methodist Episcopal Church in good and regular standing cannot be deprived of such membership without due form of trial, all those members who have not attached themselves to The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, are and have been members of The Methodist Episcopal Church, and as such they are entitled to its care and privileges.''[1]

That is to say, according to this ruling, that people had left the church on their own responsibility but no territory had been transferred, and the domain of the "church in the United States of America" was still the entire United States of America, was the intent of the finding and decision of the General Conference of 1848, because the church could not give away any part of the United States.

In this ruling there is no denial of the fact of the formation of the new Methodist Episcopal Church in the South, but a distinction is made between individuals leaving one church and forming another, and the continuing of territory in the United States as a common field for activity which both churches may occupy and, especially, the denial of the right of The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America to dis-

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[1]General Conference *Journal*, 1848, p. 164.

member any of its territory in the said United States.

In what we are saying, we have no thought of opening or discussing the old question of 1844, but are merely seeking to ascertain the law of the denomination, and to illustrate its difference of view as between missions in foreign lands and the field in the United States; and the ruling of the General Conference of 1848 throws a flood of light on the distinction in status between the home and the foreign field.

The Methodist Episcopal Church has declared it could not alienate its territory in the home land, which is the United States, but it could part with both people and territory where the work was under foreign government. Being The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, it considered that here it had peculiar rights and responsibilities, and a peculiarly permanent tenure.

With territory beyond the bounds of the United States of America the case was the very opposite. Outside the United States even the occupied territory bore a very different relation to The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, for it was not The Methodist Episcopal Church of any outside country.

It was The Methodist Episcopal Church in, and of, the United States of America with missions in foreign countries, where it sought to help the countries by spreading Christianity as understood by The Methodist Episcopal Church, but itself was

an American church. The Methodist Episcopal Mission outside the United States of America is in a foreign country, and under a foreign government, and, therefore, is not held in precisely the same way as the work in the home land, and, as has been shown, The Methodist Episcopal Church, being an American church, has held that it had no right to control the foreign, or to claim control thereof, against its will, and, consequently, it is possible for a foreign mission to become an independent church.

CHAPTER IV

THE CENTRAL SEAT OF AUTHORITY

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With the great growth of The Methodist Episcopal Church and the spread of its missions in foreign countries, it is not astonishing that inquiries may be made as to the seat of authority, or even as to whether it has any central seat of authority.

It is, therefore, proper, and even necessary to ask if The Methodist Episcopal Church has a central seat of authority; and, if it has, to ask whence the authority emanates.

The presumption is that every government has not only authority but a center from which the authority issues. Thus a national government has its capital to which the people of the country and the nations look as the center of governmental processes and the point from which the nation expresses its purposes, publishes its decisions, and sends forth its decrees.

So every organization and government has some point which is its center for legal decision and primary administration. It must be so with an ecclesiastical government, and The Methodist Episcopal Church cannot be an exception to the rule.

It is a matter of fact that this church is a government and that it does govern. As to the

place of government, that is a matter for history and present fact, and the question is, Where has its central seat of authority been, and where is it now? It has governed from somewhere, and the facts of history should reveal the locality.

The Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in the United States of America, and at the time of the organization was, of course, in these United States.

Beyond all question it was organized an American church and the seat of its governmental authority was in the United States of America. So it started, so it continued, and so it remains to this day, unless it can be shown that the central seat of authority was legally removed to some point beyond the boundaries of this country. However, that cannot be shown, because the original seat of authority never was shifted from this United States.

When the church started, and following the organizing Conference in 1784, the authority was in the Conference, and in the bishops, the Conference making the laws, and, subsequently to the meeting of the Conference, the bishops interpreting the laws, determining their application, and administering the affairs of the church.

At first the authority to make the laws was vested in the assembled Annual or Yearly Conferences, acting concurrently, and in the General Conference which then meant these Conferences meeting together. A little later it meant the quadrennial General Conference, meeting statedly

once in four years, but made up of the elders or members of the Annual Conferences, still being practically the combined Annual Conferences assembled together.

After 1808 came the delegated General Conference, which also met quadrennially, but which was composed of a proportionate number of representatives from each Annual Conference. In all these years the seat of authority of The Methodist Episcopal Church was in the United States of America.

Now, the inquirer may ask whether there was any change through the operations of the church beyond the territory of the United States, but to this the reply must be in the negative, for the seat of authority remained in the United States even after The Methodist Episcopal Church began and continued mission work in a foreign country, as for example, in the early days in Canada, which was British soil, and so later and elsewhere. Even with foreign missions the authority of the church was centered in the United States of America, and it has never been otherwise. The church in the United States, of course, recognized this country as having the center of ecclesiastical authority, and the workers and organizations under the church, everywhere always looked to the United States as the seat of the church's government and the authority which governed them.

From the church in the United States, the foreign mission got its rights and privileges, as well as its financial support, and the personal minis-

trations which the missionaries have given, and it always knew, and acknowledged, that the seat of authority of The Methodist Episcopal Church was located in the United States of America. All the great boards of the church, and even those that specifically care for the foreign missions, have their headquarters in, and meet in the United States, and always have done so. The laws made for the foreign missions, as well as for the home church, are made in the United States, and that has always been the case. The executive power, likewise, is centered in the United States, and, as everybody may know, the General Conference has always met in this country.

Some of the "bishops resident in Asia" have raised an interesting question that requires some attention. This is a suggestion and request that the General Conference of The Methodist Episcopal Church hold one of its quadrennial sessions in the city of Calcutta, in Bengal, India.

This suggestion and request will strike every one as exceedingly novel. One will think of the location of the proposed city in a foreign mission; another may think of its immense distance from the United States and the land of the mother church; while a third may try to figure up the great expense of transporting delegates from all parts of the world, and of entertaining not far from nine hundred or a thousand delegates, and their friends, in a foreign mission point.

Such matters might be considered, but the direct and most important is one of a legal character,

and that question is: Can the General Conference of The Methodist Episcopal Church meet in a foreign country?

The first answer is: It has never met outside the United States of America. The presumption, therefore, is that it cannot meet beyond the boundaries of this country. Certainly, the usage, and the unbroken usage, from the beginning of the church, is against permitting the General Conference to convene and sit in a foreign mission. If there were nothing further, that fact alone would be sufficient to decide the question; but we turn to the organic law of the denomination, and find that the matter is determined in, and by, the Constitution of the church, for Article V, section first, of the Constitution declares that "The General Conference shall meet . . . at such place in the United States of America," etc. It is, therefore, perfectly plain that the General Conference cannot convene outside "the United States of America." It could not do so even if the General Conference voted it, and ordered it by a unanimous vote, for the General Conference is subject to the Constitution of the church, and, of course, if the General Conference could not do so, it could not be done by the vote of a commission.

It will also be recalled that in the great legal document drawn up in 1796, in which the church undertook to protect the church property, it was explicitly provided that the parties would be subject "to the rules and discipline which from time to time may be agreed to by the Ministers and

Preachers of the said Church *at their General Conferences in the United States of America,"* thus showing that the General Conferences of The Methodist Episcopal Church must be held within the bounds of "the United States of America." All of which emphasizes the fact that the church itself is "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America," and that its "rules and discipline" must be made in this country. In other words, the seat of authority is in the United States of America. The printed document containing the letter from the "bishops resident in Asia," is headed, "Letter to the Bishops in the United States," and goes on to say: "The report of the Committee to prepare a communication to the Board of Bishops at home was adopted as follows"—etc. This phrasing is a recognition of the United States of America as the homeland, and of the home church in the said United States, from which influences went out to establish Christian and Methodist Episcopal missions in foreign lands. The missionaries are sent from the center, and the mother church, and these missionaries look back to the United States of America as the homeland, and to its home church, as the head center of The Methodist Episcopal Church's myriad activities.

These bishops in foreign fields, therefore, have no thought other than that the central seat of authority of The Methodist Episcopal Church is in the United States of America.

All these facts and principles prove that The Methodist Episcopal Church remains as it was,

an American church, "in the United States of America," and, though it sustains missionary operations, and has organized missions in foreign lands, it still is an American church, and continues to preserve its seat of authority in the same United States.

CHAPTER V

THE BISHOPRIC OR SUPERINTENDENCY

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THE BISHOPRIC OR SUPERINTENDENCY

The whole question of the episcopacy in Methodism is brought up anew, and in a new relation by this recent discussion, or series of formal inquiries and suggestions.

These questions relate to the Methodist Episcopal episcopacy in the United States of America, and the episcopacy which has been extended to foreign mission fields, but they all run back to the primitive episcopacy of earlier Methodism, for, though we mention it last, it was the first, and this primitive form was the germ from which all the others have grown.

Some kind of episcopacy and episcopal supervision has always existed in Methodism, and long before the title of bishop was used, for episcopacy is not so much in the titles that may be employed as in the fact of overseership or supervision of a religious work by one or more, who are charged with that duty. John Wesley from the very beginning of his organization in England was an overseer of the organization, first when it seemed like an outline sketch, and later as it enlarged and became crowded with details. The organism from the first had its laity and had its preachers, its teachers, and ministers, with religious services, and other churchlike functions. Over all this the

Reverend John Wesley was overseer, or supervisor, and he regarded himself as having an episcopate, or, as may be said, a bishopric, and he did not hesitate to say that he was an *episcopus,* or bishop, as he did when he wrote to his brother Charles: "I firmly believe, I am a scriptural επισκοπος, as much as any man in England, or in Europe; for the uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove."[1]

The question was one of fact rather than of form or any particular process. Wesley, a minister, was an overseer over ministers and a religious organization, and, hence, was an *episcopus,* or bishop, but he could claim on additional grounds.

Methodism never claimed the kind of episcopacy that some other bodies have asserted they had. It never based its idea of the bishopric on what has been styled "apostolic succession." As has been seen, Wesley rejected this dogma as "a fable, which no man ever did or can prove." And, so, in other particulars, claimed by certain ecclesiastical bodies, Methodism considered them as erroneous, or unnecessary, but as Wesley himself claimed to to be "a scriptural επισκοπος," Methodism has always claimed to have a scriptural episcopacy, and, if it were scriptural, that was quite sufficient. The essential idea of the bishopric has been that of ecclesiastical oversight or supervision, and the

[1]Methodist Magazine, 1786, p. 50. See Tyerman's *Life of Wesley,* Vol. iii, p. 445.

work might be done under a number, or a choice of titles.

This idea was found in the early days of American Methodism, in the titles Wesley gave his deputy overseers, as we may call them, namely, Assistant and General Assistant, and in the reorganization of the American societies, the titles of superintendent, or, as later, general superintendent.

With the organization of The Methodist Episcopal Church, soon came in the title "bishop" as the equivalent of general superintendent, but as more in harmony with the historic Christian Church, and as more expressive of the full functions which pertained to this exalted clerical and spiritual office.

The organizing Conference in 1784 formed a church, which was an episcopal church, and which it called The Methodist Episcopal Church; an Episcopal Church of the Methodist, or Wesleyan kind, and not of the prelatical sort, but incorporating Wesley's advanced ideas, which were advanced because they went back to the primitive church, and were drawn from the New Testament.

Wesley had used the title "superintendent" and the organizing Conference accepted that title, knowing that it had an episcopal meaning, and this idea he presented in the certificate he gave Doctor Thomas Coke after he had "set him apart" "to preside over the flock of Christ," and in his circular letter to the Americans Wesley named "Doctor Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint

superintendents over our brethren in North America," and these were duly and unanimously elected, and they were elected for America, or the United States of America.

The superintendency was for an episcopal church and consequently, must have been an episcopacy. Wesley's nomination was not enough, and, so they were elected by the Conference. The intention was that they should be "joint superintendents" and those to be in the episcopate were to be coordinate bishops with equal authority.

The title-page of the first *Book of Discipline* had the words: "composing a form of Discipline for the Ministers, Preachers, and other members of The Methodist Episcopal Church in America."

In the Minutes for 1787 appears the question: "Who are the Superintendents of our Church for the United States?" with the following:

"*Ans.* Thomas Coke, (when present in the States) and Francis Asbury." This enunciated an important principle. Bishop Coke frequently went to Great Britain and rendered service for the British Wesleyans, and the answer to questions raised in America, was that a bishop, or superintendent, did not function in America as a bishop of The Methodist Episcopal Church when outside the United States of America. The church was The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, and the bishop or superintendent was for the church in the United States, and to be an effective bishop in America, he must be in the United States of America.

In the *Book of Discipline* for the same year, 1787, the title "bishop" appears. There is the heading "Bishops" in "Section IV," and under it the subheading: "On the Constituting of Bishops and their Duty." The equivalent and substituted title, "bishop," was, therefore, used in the legal formularies, about two years and five months after the organization of the church.

In the Minutes of the next year, 1788, "Who are the Superintendents of our Church for the United States?" is changed to read: "Who are the Bishops of our Church for the United States?" and the phrase, "for the United States," shows that the superintendents, or bishops, were elected for America, and to serve in that part of geographical America called "the United States," or, more fully, "The United States of America," which, politically, from the beginning has been "America."

In the Conference Minutes for 1789, the first question is:

"Who are the Persons that exercise the Episcopal office of The Methodist Church in Europe and America?

"*Ans.* John Wesley, Thomas Coke, Francis Asbury." And the second question was:

"Who have been elected by the unanimous suffrages of the General Conference to superintend the Methodist connexion in America?

"*Ans.* Thomas Coke, Francis Asbury." The first was intended as a recognition of John Wesley, but both the first and second show that the

other bishops mentioned were elected for the work "in America," and not any other part of the world. The first also shows that the office held by Coke and Asbury was the episcopal office and that they were bishops.

So the Minutes of the next year, 1790, make the question read:

"*Quest.* 6. Who have been elected by the unanimous suffrages of the General Conference to superintend The Methodist Episcopal Church in America?

"*Ans.* Thomas Coke, Francis Asbury."

All the way along the emphasis is on "America." The church is "in America," "in the United States," or "in the United States of America." It was an American church, and the superintendents, also called bishops, were of "The Methodist Episcopal Church in America," and "for the United States" or "the United States of America," and in this country these bishops were to perform their work, and were not, and were not intended, to function as bishops outside "America" or "the United States of America."

These, and many other things, gradually and clearly crystallized into "the plan of our itinerant general superintendency," which was fixed in the first formally written Constitution of the Church, in 1808, and repeated in the new Constitution of 1900, and which is now the Constitution, and, thus, is put out of reach of sudden or ordinary legislation in the General Conference.[1]

[1]See *Discipline*, 1920, Constitution, Art. x, §3, pp. 44, 45.

The title of "bishop," as has been seen, was substituted for "superintendent" in 1787, and has always continued in the law, as well as in usage, ever since; but the idea of superintending and superintendence has always been connected with it, and to it was joined the word "general" to qualify the superintendence in order to show that it was not local, nor localized, nor limited to a subdivision of the territory, and this reached its full expression in the article of the Constitution which at this point reads: "The General Conference shall not change or alter any part or rule of our government, so as to do away Episcopacy, or destroy the plan of our itinerant General Superintendency."[1]

The field was the United States of America and no general superintendent could be limited to a particular part of that field, but each and every bishop had the right and duty of general superintendence everywhere in that field, and this was in opposition to what has been termed diocesan episcopacy, but the general superintendency did not, and could not, extend personally outside of the United States of America, and exist as it did within the boundaries of this country. The bishops, who were general superintendents, as has been seen, were "for the United States," and not individually for foreign lands as in the United States, and this remained true even after the church had established missions in foreign countries.

[1] *Discipline*, 1920, Constitution, Art. x, §3, pp. 44, 45.

The general superintendents never were located outside the United States of America before the Constitution was made and the understood prohibition was embodied in the "plan" which the Constitution protects. They belonged within this country, and their residences were within the United States—this United States, not the "United States of Mexico," the "United States of Columbia," or the "United States of Brazil," but "the United States of America."

While it was distinctly understood that no general superintendent bishop could be located outside the United States, and, as we have seen, even after missions had been planted in foreign lands, there was no idea that a general superintendent could be placed in residence in a field outside the United States, yet there came a time, now and then, when a general superintendent, retaining his residence in the United States, and also his official relation to this country, was permitted to visit a foreign mission field, and make a tour of inspection, giving such temporary supervision as was deemed necessary, but not to stay at any length, or to have a residence abroad. It was simply an emergency visit by a bishop who directly and legally belonged to the home land and the church at home.

On these emergency tours the fact that they did not belong to the regular duties of the general superintendent making the tour was distinctly understood. In the visit beyond the United States such a bishop was performing an extra service,

and this was peculiarly recognized. A general superintendent on such a tour had necessarily expenses not belonging to his normal duties, and these expenses were not covered from the episcopal fund, which provided for his ordinary and official support. When he went beyond the United States he was in a foreign mission field, and rendering service to the foreign mission department of the church. In other words, he was doing foreign-mission work in the emergency, and therefore his traveling expenses, including entertainment not otherwise provided, were properly paid from the missionary treasury. The bishop was a temporary loan to the foreign missionary cause, and the distinction in the law was maintained. It was an admission that the bishop was not in the discharge of his ordinary duty for which he was paid from the episcopal fund.

The use of the word "superintendent" at the beginning and the almost immediate substitution of the title "bishop" has been viewed differently by different minds. By some it has been approved while by others it has been criticized, and in many instances the criticism came from those who were not well informed as to the facts and as to the motive.

Attention should be called to the fact that, though "superintendent" was stricken out in some places, and the word "bishop" substituted, the words "superintendent" and "superintendency" never were abandoned by the church, and they continue to this day in the laws and in legal

documents, and even in the Constitution of the church.

In this way the title "bishop" and the title "superintendent," or "general superintendent," seem to divide the honors, but the fact of the divided use seems to have created some confusion of thought, which, however, may be corrected by an accurate knowledge of the history and a correct understanding of the meaning of the terms and the intention of their use.

Wesley used the word "superintendent" possibly to avoid some animadversions from his opponents, or possibly from a feeling of modesty in view of his great ecclesiastical movement; but whether he desired to disarm criticism or not, he knew nevertheless that the primary meanings of "superintendent," "overseer," and "bishop" were essentially the same and that they could be used as equivalents, and one could be substituted for the other.

Literally the word "superintendent" conveys the idea of one who is above, who has the direction, and who has authority in this direction. Turn to any good dictionary and this will be found to be the thought in the word.

The *Century Dictionary* defines "superintendent" as "One who has the oversight and charge of something with power of direction; supervisor, overseer." Of course an overseer is one who oversees, but the overseeing or superintendency is qualified by the actual nature of the work to be done, and an ecclesiastical superintendent is some-

thing different from a superintendent of a factory or some form of material construction.

As to the word "bishop" it would be difficult to find any essential distinction between it and the primary idea of superintendent. The word "bishop" comes into English from the Anglo-Saxon *bisceop,* which, as Skeat tells us, was "borrowed from Latin *episcopus,*" which in turn came from the "Greek ἐπίσκοπος, an overseer, overlooker," which comes from "Greek ἐπί, upon, and σκοπός, one that watches," and the bishop, *Episcopus,* or *episkopos,* is one who watches upon or over; or, as another high authority gives it: "Greek ἐπίσκοπος; ἐπί, over + σκοπός, inspector, from root of σκοπεῖν, to look to." So a bishop is the inspector who looks over, or oversees; or, in other words, who superintends, and "superintendent" and "bishop" are essentially the same in their primary meaning, and the immediate meaning is to be determined by the character of the work.

Turning again to the *Century Dictionary,* we find this definition of "bishop": "1. An overseer. 2. In the earliest usage of the Christian Church, a spiritual overseer, whether of a local church or of a number of churches." "Bishops and Presbyters, literally, overseer and elders." Then McClintock and Strong's *Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Cyclopedia,* says: "Superintendent. 1. The officer of the early church who was also called overseer, or bishop (ἐπίσκοπος)." So that a superintendent was an overseer and a bishop was an overseer, and as both had the same primary

meaning they could be used interchangeably, and the use might be a matter of taste or preference. That being the case, The Methodist Episcopal Church had a right to use "bishop" or "superintendent" as it preferred, or to use both. Indeed, Wesley in his Circular Letter to his American followers, written in view of their coming reorganization, conceded their liberty, and told them they were free to follow the model of the New-Testament Church. Thus he said: "As our American brethren are now totally disentangled from the State and from the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive church; and we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free."[1]

But the plain word "superintendent" did not convey to the common mind all that was intended by the office, for the work was more than mere oversight and administrative direction, and "bishop" was the ecclesiastical word which had long been used by the historic Christian Church, and better expressed the ideas beyond mere oversight, as, for example, the ordination of candidates for the ministry and the spiritual ministrations for the uplift of the church.

Wesley, and The Methodist Episcopal Church,

[1]Thomas B. Neely: *A History of the Origin and Development of the Governing Conference in Methodism*, New York, 1892, pp. 233, 234.

associated with the title "superintendent" the highest functions of a church official. Some, however, have seemed to think that Wesley intended it to mean something less than the full and regular bishopric, but this is not a correct reading of history. Wesley did not intimate that this superintendency was characterized by inferiority, or as being lower in rank than the bishopric. On the contrary, Wesley regarded it as possessing great importance, for the superintendent was to be the chief executive and ecclesiastical overseer, and the work was understood to be the work of a bishop, and all that a bishop could do this superintendent could do, and the nature of the work reveals the nature of the office, and that justified the title of bishop. So the early Methodist Episcopal Church, knowing that the superintendent was not merely to oversee and administer the affairs of the church organization, but was also to perform every rightful service that belonged to the episcopate, it concluded to use also the title of "bishop" in harmony with its own episcopal organization and the ecclesiastical usages of the ages. This was legitimate and easily understood.

As already stated, this did not mean the total abandonment of the word "superintendent" or the idea of the superintendency, and they both appeared in the first written Constitution of 1808, where we find both "general superintendent" and "general superintendency." At no time did "superintendent" or "superintendency" in this connection ever have the hard and cold meaning

that may be found in a secular superintendency, for it is not a secular superintendency. It may mean an official position, and it may be spoken of as an office, but it is not a secular office, and should not be treated as such. It is an ecclesiastical and religious office, with sacred functions, which means much more and something widely different from a merely secular position. It is not profane and it should not be profaned by the incumbents or any one else.

In passing, it may be recalled that the Scotch Reformers had their "superintendents," and also that the Reverend Doctor William White, later Bishop White, of Philadelphia, in 1782, before the organization of the Protestant Episcopal Church, proposed the election of "permanent superintending ministers, with powers similar to those of bishops."[1].

Some in the church even to-day seem to have misapprehended the import and intention in the use of the term "superintendent," and its use by some and the references to it by others, even in recent years, seem to show that they regard it as a depreciatory term which discounts the office; and sometimes there is a suspicion that now and then the word is employed for the purpose of disparaging the Methodist Episcopal episcopacy.

An intelligent reading of history should correct any misapprehension, and an accurate understanding of the principles involved should rebuke

[1]Bird Wilson, D.D.: *Memoir of the Life of Bishop William White*, Philadelphia, 1839, p. 83.

any one who has a malevolent motive. However, even where there is no evil intention, there may be an erroneous purpose in stressing the idea of superintendent as against the use of the churchly word "bishop." In these movements sometimes there is the idea of the secular arrayed against the sacred. It certainly was a great injury to the church, when the historic and clerical title, "presiding elder" was stricken out and the secular title of "district superintendent" was substituted. It gained nothing, but lost much, and made for the secularization of the mind of the church. At the same time there is a right use of the word "superintendent" and of the idea of superintendence. "Bishop" was the correct address for the person in the episcopal office, but for a certain legal appropriateness the term "superintendent" emphasized a special purpose.

For about a quarter of a century the episcopacy went on in action testing itself, and in this period the same individual was called both a bishop and a general superintendent, the latter title being used to express the fact that the bishop was not a localized officer, like, for example, a diocesan prelate, but with an oversight that was general, extending over the entire United States, and that, no matter how many bishops there were, they were all general bishops for service anywhere and everywhere throughout the entire country, while each bishop was equal in authority to each and every other bishop.

In the period referred to the episcopacy went

on developing itself, as the bishops operated throughout the United States, as the country expanded and the population grew, until the bishops and the church had evolved a well matured and well understood episcopal system, which could be spoken of as a "plan," or "the plan," and, when the first written Constitution of the church was being formulated, this "plan" was incorporated in the Constitution, and phrased "the plan of our itinerant General Superintendency." "The plan" was not only specifically recited in the Constitution, but it was so incorporated that the General Conference cannot change it either directly or indirectly.

This "plan," as stated in the Constitution, reveals, in a condensed, but comprehensive, manner, the nature of the episcopacy of The Methodist Episcopal Church. It is a "superintendency," and the bishops are the overseers of the church. They are not overseers in the church, merely; all of the bishops are general overseers of the entire territory, so that each and all have authority and equal authority; and where one has authority all have authority, so that there can be no localization of any bishop who is a general superintendent bishop. Then this general superintendency is an "itinerant general superintendency," and each and every general superintendent bishop cannot settle down in a see and simply administer therefrom, but it is his duty "To travel through the Connection at large,"[1] and, "If a Bishop cease

[1] *Discipline*, 1920, ¶208, §7, p. 208.

from traveling at large among the people without the consent of the General Conference, he shall not thereafter exercise, in any degree, the episcopal office in our Church.'"[1]

The episcopacy of "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America" is a superintendency, a general superintendency, and an itinerant general superintendency, but is such an episcopacy according to "the plan of our itinerant general superintendency" which was at that time, namely, 1808, well settled, and well known to the church, with a long-established practice with which all were familiar.

By the Constitution of the church this matter is placed beyond the power of the General Conference either to change this "plan" or to go contrary to it, powerful though that body may be.

The Constitution declares: "The General Conference shall not change nor alter any part or rule of our government so as to do away Episcopacy, nor destroy the plan of our itinerant General Superintendency."[2]

That means not only that the General Conference cannot change the wording of this Constitutional provision, but, further, that it shall not make a change anywhere, or in anything, for example in any part of the Book of *Discipline,* or in practice, that would have the effect of modifying "the plan" of our episcopacy.

[1] *Discipline*, 1920, ¶214, p. 161.
[2] Constitution, Art. x, §3, *Discipline*, pp. 44, 45.

CHAPTER VI

THE MISSIONARY BISHOPRIC

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The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America had a growing territory under the advancing flag of the republic as it kept up with the expanding national boundaries, and, at the same time, the church was spreading its form of Christianity at various points outside the United States and within the bounds of other political governments. The church was an episcopal body and had bishops, who were also called general superintendents, who had supervision of the entire United States, and who could go anywhere within the national territory, but they were "for the United States," as the legal formularies stated, and could not be located beyond the borders of this republic. Concern, therefore, was manifested for the episcopal care of the foreign mission fields. To loan a bishop, who belonged in the United States, to make a long, and yet, a hasty trip, to a distant country, which required the temporary suspension of his regular work in the United States, could hardly be deemed just to the church at home, and it was considered inadequate to meet the needs of the foreign missions.

Further, it had become clearly affirmed that a general superintendent who went outside the United States by that act suspended his rights as a general superintendent in the United States.

That was not only in legal affirmations, but it was illustrated by the case of Bishop Coke, who frequently went across the Atlantic and tarried in Great Britain and Ireland, to help the Wesleyan body in those countries.

The entry in the Conference Minutes of 1808 is very significant. Thus:

"*Quest.* 6. Who are the Superintendents and Bishops?

"*Ans.* Francis Asbury, William McKendree.

"☞ Dr. Coke, at the request of the British Conference, and by the consent of our General Conference, resides in Europe: he is not to exercise the office of Superintendent among us, in the United States, until he be recalled by the General Conference, or by all the Annual Conferences respectively."

Being out of the United States and rendering service abroad changed the status of Bishop Coke for the time being, so that he is not listed as a bishop, though his name had headed the list from the beginning, and he could not "exercise the office of Superintendent" of The Methodist Episcopal Church "in the United States," and the only way his functions in the United States could be restored was by the General Conference, or all the Annual Conferences, recalling him. He was one of "the Superintendents of our Church for the United States" "when present in the States," but not when he was resident outside this country, and, outside, he could not "exercise the office of Superintendent" "inside this nation."

A shadow of the same principle is seen in the long-established rule of the Board of Bishops which forbids a bishop who is out of the United States exercising his superintendency in a home Conference, though he has been duly assigned to have charge of the said Conference. Under the rule he must not assume his presidency until he is in the United States. In such a case the bishop who has just had charge of the Conference retains charge until the newly assigned bishop returns to the United States.[1]

These and various other things show the difference of the standing of a general superintendent, who happens to be absent from the United States, as to matters of administration in this country.

"The plan of our itinerant general superintendency," as it was phrased in the first written Constitution of the church, and still is so phrased, because it has never been changed, embodied all these principles, as the history and the legal documents show, and they stand as from the early years, and through the generations that followed, and must continue to stand in law and practice, as long as they are in the Constitution, which cannot be changed even by the General Conference.

The general superintendent was "for the United States," and there he could not be located in a particular section, for he was an "itinerant," not in a local but a "general superintendency"; and if he could not be located in a particular part of the home church, his rightful sphere, he could not be

[1]Bishops' Rulings, Approved by the General Conference.

located constitutionally in any particular foreign mission field. That was what the law said, what the church understood, and what the church carried out in its practice, and these facts prohibited the location of a general superintendent in a foreign field.

However, the legal difficulty was not the only difficulty. The very fact that a bishop who was a general superintendent "for the United States," a homogeneous field, for which a bishop who was adapted to one section was adapted to the work in every section, was presumably unadapted to the work in a foreign field where there are wide differences in race, in language, in history, and in usages. That being the case, the bishop who might be a brilliant success in the home church might be a dismal failure in the foreign mission.

To do proper work in a foreign country the bishop either had to know these peculiarities of the foreign land and its peoples, before he was selected, or he had to be assured time enough in the field to learn these things, and, then time enough to give the field the benefit of his acquired knowledge and his experience.

The itinerant bishop flitting from field to field, could not meet these peculiar needs, and it would not be economical wisdom, when the bishop began to master his foreign task to call him back to permanent work in the United States of America, where these foreign things just mastered are of little or no special value in the practical work. Rather than to take a man well fitted for the epis-

copacy in the United States and send him to a foreign country, where he would have almost everything to learn, and then to hurry him back, it would seem better to take a missionary, who already has the knowledge and the experience, and make him a missionary bishop for his own field. The law and the conviction of the church indicated that the general superintendent bishops were for the church in the United States of America, the country where was located the seat of authority of The Methodist Episcopal Church.

Missionary work had been established and was beginning to develop in Liberia, in South America and in China, and the question of direct and immediate oversight in these foreign lands was impressing itself on the mind of the church. The denomination was episcopal, and it considered that the oversight in a foreign mission should have an episcopal character, and the question was as to what kind of episcopacy it should be. The idea of sending a general superintendent bishop could not be entertained. Both law and usage were against that, but it did not follow that the need could not be met in some other way. That the general superintendents were not for the foreign work was an established conviction of the church, and the prevailing judgment that they could not be placed in foreign mission fields is shown in many writings and records.

Thus in the work on *Methodist Episcopal Missions,*[1] written by Missionary Secretary Doctor

[1]New York, 1895, Vol. I, p. 237.

John M. Reid, in 1879, and later revised and extended by Doctor John T. Gracey, himself an experienced missionary in India, we find this: "The Constitution of The Methodist Episcopal Church clearly forbade a local superintendency."

Then, referring to the visit of Bishop Levi Scott to Liberia, the same work says: "The visit had also served to strengthen the conviction of the home church that it was impossible to superintend the work in the foreign field without a local episcopacy."[1]

After much thought the church at last concluded that it must have another class of bishops than those who were general superintendents. In other words, it must have a class just for foreign work, who could be located in designated foreign countries, where they would, so to speak, settle down continuously and become specialists and experts in their particular locality. To have this would require not a mere vote of the General Conference, but a change in the Constitution, and this required the full constitutional process to make an amendment in the third restriction.

In the Constitution of the Church the Third Restrictive Rule at that time read: "They shall not change or alter any part or rule of our government, so as to do away Episcopacy, or destroy the plan of our itinerant General Superintendency."[2]

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[1] J. M. Reid and John T. Gracey: *Methodist Episcopal Missions*, New York, 1895, vol. I, p. 237.

[2] *Discipline*, 1856, "General Conference," p. 36.

This restrictive rule was one of the limitations on the power of the General Conference. This body could not change the Constitution nor go contrary to it, but it could propose a change and so initiate the process of amendment. Accordingly, the General Conference of 1856 formulated and proposed an amendment to the above-mentioned "Third Restrictive Rule" under the form of the following resolution:

"*Resolved,* That we recommend to the several Annual Conferences to alter the Discipline, paragraph 3, section 2, part I, by adding the words, after the word 'superintendency,' in the fourth line, 'but may appoint a missionary bishop or superintendent for any of our foreign missions, limiting his episcopal jurisdiction to the same respectively.' "[1]

This amendment of 1856 was duly concurred in by the affirmative vote of the Annual Conferences, and became part of the church's Constitution, and at that time the whole restriction reads: "They shall not change or alter any part or rule of our government so as to do away Episcopacy, nor destroy the plan of our itinerant General Superintendency; but may appoint a Missionary Bishop or Superintendent for any of our Foreign Missions, limiting his Episcopal jurisdiction to the same respectively."[2]

This added a radically different episcopacy, so that the church had two kinds of bishops, one for

[1] General Conference *Journals*, vol. iii, 1856, pp. 144-146.
[2] *Ibid.*

the home field in the United States, and the other for the foreign mission field. The general superintendent was an itinerating bishop moving about in the United States, while the missionary bishop was located in one particular foreign field for which he was elected and to which his episcopal jurisdiction was limited. This was a very important amendment to the Constitution, and yet after the amendment was made it would appear to have been carelessly, if not strangely, handled.

At the General Conference of 1860 the bishops announced that the amendment above named had been duly submitted to all the Annual Conferences and that they had given the requisite majority for the amendment, so that the restriction had been so "altered as to allow the appointment of a missionary bishop or superintendent for any of our foreign missions."[1]

The result of the vote having been announced it was then the duty of the editor of the *Discipline* to print the Third Restrictive Rule as so amended. Any one, however, who examines the *Discipline* of 1860 will be surprised to find as he looks through the chapter on "The General Conference" that the amendment was not inserted. So it was not inserted in the Restrictive Rule in 1864, and it was not in 1868. All these quadrenniums had passed and yet the amendment was not inserted in its proper place.

Of course the amendment was legally in the *Discipline* even if it had not been printed therein.

[1]General Conference *Journals*, vol. iv, 1860, p. 313.

It was in the *Journals* of the General and the Annual Conferences, and, though it did not appear in the Restrictive Rule the bishops carried on their administration and consecrated men for the missionary episcopacy. Even now it must seem strange that the amendment was not recorded in the book of *Discipline,* and that the omission apparently was unnoticed.

In 1872, Bishop William L. Harris, just elected bishop, was the editor of the book of *Discipline* bearing that date. Turning to the *Discipline* of 1872, we find the first attempt to print the amendment in the Third Restrictive Rule. Bishop William L. Harris was such an exact and businesslike man that he might have been expected to discover the omission and to have inserted the amendment in the right place. Our surprise, then, was great to find that the insertion in 1872 was incorrect, and that the error was carried on for about a score of years in the succeeding books of *Discipline,* and that David Sherman, D.D., painstaking though he was, perpetuated the error in his various editions of his *History of the Revisions of the Discipline.*

Beginning with 1872 the amendment was printed in the Third Restrictive Rule as follows: "but may appoint a missionary bishop or superintendent for any of our foreign missions, limiting his jurisdiction to the same respectively."[1]

One word, and a very important word, was omitted. The *Discipline* of 1872 read, "limiting his

[1] *Discipline*, 1872, ¶95, pp. 52, 53.

jurisdiction," but as proposed by the General Conference of 1856, and concurred in by the Annual Conferences it read, "limiting his episcopal jurisdiction." How this happened we cannot say. An editor, or proof-reader, might have thought the word superfluous, or it might have been accidental.

No one had any right to exercise private judgment in such a matter. The word ought to have been printed because with it in, the amendment had been adopted. Further the word was of vital importance, for there is a difference between "his jurisdiction" and "his episcopal jurisdiction," and if through all those long years "episcopal" had been in, it might have prevented much confused controversy as to the status of the missionary bishopric.[1]

In my studies of some years ago, I discovered the omission and called the attention of Bishop Edward G. Andrews, then editor of the *Discipline,* to the matter, and demonstrated the correct reading. He accepted the facts and made the correction in the forthcoming *Discipline* for 1892, after a lapse of twenty years from 1872, or thirty-two years from 1860, and the word has stood there ever since.

After the adoption of the amendment of 1856 missionary bishops were elected and consecrated for Liberia, the first to be so elected and conse-

[1]Thomas B. Neely, D.D., LL.D.: *The Governing Conference in Methodism*, Cincinnati and New York, 1892, pp. 452. See pp. 417-419.

crated being the Rev. Francis Burns, a colored man, who was consecrated in the United States, on the 4th of October, 1858. After his decease, the Rev. John Wright Roberts, another man of color, was elected Missionary Bishop for Liberia, and was consecrated in New York City, on June 20, 1866. He died on January 30, 1875, and the country was left without a missionary bishop for some years.

It was natural that the missionary episcopacy should first be applied to Liberia, which was the oldest existing mission of the denomination, and the early experiments justified this new form of episcopacy for foreign fields.

In 1884 there was a new interest and a new departure in the missionary bishopric, and, when certain educated colored ministers declined to accept the responsibility of taking up the duties of a missionary bishop in Liberia, the thought of the General Conference of 1884 turned toward the Rev. William Taylor, and by a large vote he was elected "Missionary Bishop of Africa." Bishop William Taylor was one of the greatest missionaries of modern times. He had made missionary tours in all the continents and in Australia and other islands of the seas, and had marvelous success. He could not be made bishop for Liberia, or any other single country. Nothing less than a continent was fitting for him, and so he, the first white man to be made a missionary bishop in his church, was elected and consecrated "Missionary Bishop of Africa."

The missionary bishop is a superintendent, but not a general superintendent. The title "missionary bishop" does not discount him, for he is a genuine bishop. He is limited to his mission field, but that may be, and has been, a whole continent, and his limiting is simply liberty—liberty to stay, and learn the customs and characteristics of a peculiar land and people, and liberty to stay and apply the knowledge of language, of race, and of usage, that he has learned.

This was a great and wise adjustment. There was the home field under the American flag—a vast homogeneous field under one government, one language, and a common moral and religious ideal, where the bishops could itinerate with equal effectiveness anywhere. On the other hand, the world beyond and around, with many governments, many races, many languages, and various laws and usages, presented a different problem and called for a bishop who could stay with his people and year by year acquire knowledge to enable him to master a peculiar situation and educate those under his care in the truth and ways of Christianity and Christian civilization.

The wisdom of the general superintendency for the United States, and the wisdom of the missionary episcopacy for foreign lands, with their miscellaneous conditions, have been demonstrated by the success of the church at home and abroad in the more than three score years since the missionary episcopacy was established. The general superintendency is best adapted for the United

States, and the missionary episcopacy for foreign lands.

With the new indorsement of the missionary episcopacy, Bishop William Taylor went forth as missionary bishop for Africa and for twelve years, as bishop in charge, he compelled the world to think of the religious needs of the African continent, for the field was no longer Liberia, but Africa.

During Bishop Taylor's first quadrennium, and especially, toward the approach of the following General Conference, a vigorous discussion about the missionary bishopric sprung up in the church press. One paper in particular was quite active in the matter, and there was a feeling that there was some opposition to Bishop Taylor or his methods, and that inference seemed to cause, to some extent, a division among many, so that some seemed to be pro-Taylor and others anti-Taylor, at least to some degree. The real trouble, however, was that a number did not have an accurate conception as to the status of the missionary bishopric and as to what was involved in the actual administration of the office, a fact likely to arise in any General Conference through the change in the personnel as the older men who did know pass from the field of action and their places are taken by new men who have not yet mastered all the principles in the polity of the church. However it may have been, there was an expectation that in the General Conference the differences would provoke days of fiery debate, but as to what side

would have the majority was not clear until after the Conference had convened. The subject was sent to the Committee on the Episcopacy in the General Conference of 1888. Of this large committee the Reverend William H. Olin, D.D., of the Wyoming Conference, was chairman. A Subcommittee on the Missionary Bishopric was appointed and the writer found himself on this subcommittee. The subcommittee promptly met for organization, and it unanimously elected the writer to be its chairman.

Immediately I wrote the report, and the next night submitted it to the subcommittee, which adopted it without a dissenting vote, and it was reported to the main committee, which scanned it with the greatest care, and after discussion, adopted it with an enthusiastic vote. Then I was selected to represent the Committee on Episcopacy in presenting the report to the General Conference and speaking for the Committee during the various stages of procedure. The action on the report on the Missionary Bishopric is stated in the *Journal* for Saturday morning, May 19, 1888.[1]

The report was an historical and legal analysis of the misionary episcopacy as found in The Methodist Episcopal Church, and this analysis covered eight questions, as follows:

"1. The first question raised is whether a Missionary Bishop is a true Bishop?" "2. Whether a Missionary Bishop is what the Discipline terms

[1]General Conference *Journal*, 1888, pp. 300, 301.

a General Superintendent?" "3. What are the limitations of the power of a Missionary Bishop as compared with a Bishop who is a General Superintendent?" "4. Whether a Missionary Bishop is subordinate to the General Superintendents or any one of them?" "5. Whether a General Conference can by resolution take from a Missionary Bishop, the qualifying word 'missionary,' and leave him a Bishop of the other class—that is to say a General Superintendent?" "6. Whether a Missionary Bishop should receive his support from 'the Episcopal Fund' or from the funds of the Missionary Society?" "7. Whether the paying of a Missionary Bishop from the Missionary Fund would affect his status as a Bishop?" and, "8. Whether a Missionary Bishop should have any relation to the Missionary Society?"

The report answered these questions, and at some length so as to make the status of a missionary bishop perfectly plain, and then the series of questions was followed by a summary of numbered answers condensed from the preceding part of the report.

This summary as finally adopted was as follows:

"1. That a Missionary Bishop is a Bishop elected for a specified foreign mission field, with full episcopal powers, but with Episcopal jurisdiction limited to the foreign mission field for which he was elected.

"2. That a Missionary Bishop is not, in the meanings of the Discipline, a General Superintendent.

"3. That a Missionary Bishop is not subordinate to the General Superintendents, but is coordinate with them in authority in the field to which he is appointed, and is amenable for his conduct to the General Conference, as is a General Superintendent.

"4. That the election of a Missionary Bishop carries with it the assignment to a specified foreign mission field, and that a Missionary Bishop cannot be made a General Superintendent except by a distinct election to that office.

"5. That a Missionary Bishop should receive his support from the Episcopal Fund.

"6. That a Missionary Bishop should, in his field, cooperate with the Missionary Society of the Church in the same way that a General Superintendent cooperates in the foreign mission field over which he has Episcopal charge.

"7. That when a Missionary Bishop, by death or other cause, ceases to perform Episcopal duty for the foreign field to which he was assigned by the General Conference, the General Superintendents at once take supervision of said field.

"8. That in the matter of a transfer of a preacher from a field within the jurisdiction of a Missionary Bishop to a Conference under the Episcopal supervision of a General Superintendent, or from a Conference under the Episcopal supervision of a General Superintendent to a field within the jurisdiction of a Missionary Bishop, it shall require mutual agreement between the two Bishops, and a similar agreement shall

be required between the Bishops having charge, when the proposed transfer is between two foreign fields over which there are Missionary Bishops.

"9. That in the matter of a complaint against or the trial of 'a Missionary Bishop' the preliminary steps shall be as in the case of a General Superintendent; but the Missionary Bishop may be tried before a Judicial Conference in the United States of America."[1]

There was very little opposition to the report and it was adopted overwhelmingly. It finally received the approval of the Conference almost exactly as I had written it and as it came from the Committee on Episcopacy. In the matter of support I had written that it should come from the Missionary Fund, because the work was in a mission field, and that was the view of the committee, but an amendment was offered changing the support to the Episcopal Fund. That was presumably intended as a compliment to Bishop Taylor, and it went through, but the next General Conference, in 1892, put it back on the missionary treasury.

The adoption of this report cleared the atmosphere, and put the missionary bishopric on a proper basis, as it gave it dignity, independence, and opportunity, so that some began to say that it was the greatest bishopric in the church, and all saw the missionary episcopacy revealed as an ex-

[1]General Conference *Journal*, 1888, pp. 392-396, which incidentally shows that the seat of authority is in the United States.

ceedingly noble office that any minister might feel proud to fill.

The discussion and adoption of the report led to a better understanding, and made it possible at that General Conference of 1888 to elect the missionary, Doctor James M. Thoburn, as missionary bishop for India, and his marvelous career showed what the missionary episcopacy could do. Then, in 1896, it made possible the election of Doctor Joseph C. Hartzell, to succeed Bishop Taylor for Africa, where he extended the missions into North Africa and from Cairo to the Cape, and kings and princes and the great men of three continents treated him as their equal and deemed it a pleasure to help him in his work, which as an active bishop continued through twenty years. Such men and others who followed them have demonstrated that the missionary episcopacy was no inferior office.

The General Conference of 1888 was only another occasion when the church practically pronounced that the proper episcopacy for the foreign field was the missionary episcopacy.

From the beginning the general superintendent bishops were for the United States of America. That was in "the plan of our itinerant general superintendency," and when "the plan" was put in the written Constitution of 1808, it was simply saying what everybody knew—that it was unconstitutional to locate any general superintendent in a foreign field. Then this was so thoroughly understood that the General Conference of 1856 de-

vised the missionary episcopacy that there could be a constitutional bishopric in the foreign mission fields of The Methodist Episcopal Church.

The Constitution that made it unconstitutional to locate a general superintendent in a foreign field in 1808, and in 1856, and the Constitution since 1856 that made it constitutional to locate a missionary bishop in a foreign mission is just the same now as it has been through these long years.

How could any one with the Third Restrictive Rule before him fail to see that a general superintendent cannot be a resident bishop in a foreign mission, and that missionary bishops are the only kind the church is authorized to place in foreign mission fields?

"The General Conference shall not change nor alter any part or rule of our government so as to do away Episcopacy, nor destroy the plan of our itinerant General Superintendency; but may elect a Missionary Bishop or Superintendent for any of our foreign missions, limiting his Episcopal jurisdiction to the same respectively."[1]

The missionary bishop may be localized; the general superintendent cannot be localized.

PERSONAL NOTE.—It may be recalled that the writer of these sentiments, though a general superintendent bishop, was a resident for some years, with episcopal duties in a foreign field, and some one may be inclined to contrast that fact with the facts and arguments presented in these pages.

In view of that, it is proper to say that, though

[1] *Discipline*, 1920, Constitution Art. x, §3, ¶46, §3, pp. 44, 45.

a general superintendent bishop, I was assigned a residence in the city of Buenos Ayres, this does not modify the force of the facts and arguments herein presented, unless in that it gives them added strength.

I did not select the place of residence, but it was chosen for me and I was assigned to that point by the General Conference which followed the recommendations of a committee. So I went because I was ordered by authority which relieved me of responsibility.

I went in good spirits and worked hard and faithfully, and the Annual Conferences voted approval of my administration and requested that I be reassigned to the same South American field. A leading member of the General Conference Committee, however, stated that, on account of my wife's illness, it would not be right to send me back.

After my transfer from that field a bronze tablet was placed in the Rosario church which recites that I was the "*primero obispo residente en Sud America*"—the first resident bishop in South America—and, about five years after my transfer to the United States, the Eastern South America Conference, without any intimation to me, in addition to repeated indorsements, unanimously by a rising vote passed a remarkable resolution of appreciation of their first resident bishop, referring to his administration and alluding to special things accomplished, for example, books written in the interest of South American Missions, and

saying "that he shall always be remembered by us with sincere admiration and gratitude both on account of his wise and just administration, and on account of his constant interest and sacrifices in this South American work, high monuments to his pastoral fidelity being: "La Predicación," "Juan Wesley," "South America," etc., etc.

The Rev. A. G. Tallon, who forwarded the resolution, the son of the never-to-be-forgotten Doctor and Professor William Tallon, closes by saying: "This gives me an opportunity of addressing you as a beloved father in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

I left a good part of my heart in South America and have never lost interest in this foreign field so specially important to all Americans, but my experience there, my knowledge of foreign missions, and my long time study of the law and history of The Methodist Episcopal Church strongly confirm what I have stated and proved in this book as to the home church and its foreign mission fields.

CHAPTER VII

THE BOARD OF BISHOPS

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The episcopacy of The Methodist Episcopal Church is in the very nature of the church, and has been so from the birth of the organization, and was announced in the title of the body, and, further, was foreshadowed by the polity of Wesley, and of the early Wesleyan societies in Great Britain and in America, and so important has it been regarded that this episcopacy is protected by the Constitution of the church so that it cannot be legally destroyed, changed, or modified by ordinary legislation or the mutation of passing events, or waves of popular commotion.

There has always been a body of bishops since the organization of the church. At the beginning there were two bishops, Bishop Thomas Coke and Bishop Francis Asbury. The number has varied from time to time. In 1920 there were forty-two, and five retired missionary bishops. But there has always been an episcopal body made up of the bishops of the church at the time, whether the number was small or large. If there were only two bishops, they constituted the body of the episcopacy. If there was only one living bishop he made the body, and, as ministers were made bishops they passed up into the episcopal body,

which always stood out as one of the distinct bodies of the denomination.

To be this distinct body did not require the passage of any formal resolution, or any action under the statute law. In the very nature of things the episcopal body came into being with the creation of the first bishops at the organization of the church, and as soon as any one was made a bishop he was set apart with his brother bishops, at first under the unwritten Constitution of the church, and under "the plan," which existed before the written Constitution of 1808, and then was embodied in the written organic law of the church.

Hence, as soon as there were bishops, there was a body of bishops who came together because they had been made bishops, with duties already marked out for them by the episcopacy itself in "the plan of our itinerant General Superintendency,"[1] and by the formal Constitution, and in the discharge of these duties they are protected by the Constitution which empowers them. Naturally, and logically, and also, legally, when they come together, each the equal of any other, it is their duty to decide as to the details of their episcopal work.

In the Methodist Episcopal Church there are just three great continuous bodies: the laity, the ministry, and the episcopacy—the laity forming the body of the membership, the regular ministry as in the Annual Conferences, and the bishops of the church. It is to be observed that there is an

[1]Constitution, Art. x, §3.

order of advance, or gradation. All begin in the laity, for everybody in the church at one period belonged to the laity.

Out of the laity the ministry comes, and out of the ministry comes the episcopacy. Then, when one is elevated from the laity into the ministry, he becomes a member of the Annual Conference, and likewise, when a minister is made a bishop, he is lifted out of the Annual Conference and placed in the body of the bishops and becomes a member of the episcopal body, and under "the plan," this episcopal body has its own constitutional functions. The laity have their own place and their own activities in the church; the ministers in the Annual Conference have theirs; and the bishops have theirs; each with some similarities, but each with marked differences.

The bishops continue to be ministers, but with added duties, responsibilities, and powers. They continue to have the preaching function, and the sacramental function, but they have the added duties of overseeing the work of the church and shepherding the flock of Christ, and associated with these are many detailed duties.

Thus there are three great, separate, and continuous classes, or bodies, in the church, namely, the laity, the ministry, and the episcopate, the first of which appears in the local church, the second in the Annual Conference, and the third in the episcopal body, or body of the bishops.

The General Conference, it will be perceived, does not belong to this classification, first, because

it does not contain or stand for one class, and, second, because the General Conference is not a continuous, or permanent body, but a representative gathering which is made up of delegates for the time, and who may never be chosen again, and who cease to be members with the dissolution of the body.

Bodies of bishops collectively are called by different titles. The Protestant Episcopal Church calls its body of bishops the House of Bishops, and The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, styles its body of bishops the College of Bishops.

The Methodist Episcopal Church spoke of its bishops collectively as "The Bishops," a body that existed and which met from time to time as was deemed necessary. In recent years the church has gradually settled down to the title "The Board of Bishops," as indicating its body of bishops, though the simple colloquial title, "The Bishops," meant just as much.

The title "Board" seems to have come in when the fashion prevailed of changing the title "Society" to "Board." Thus the "Missionary Society" became the "Board of Missions." By a very natural process the popular trend probably reached and included the bishops, and they finally succumbed to the flow of the current, or, if preferred, the propaganda. Possibly some modest brother suggested the idea, and it became common before it found its way into the book of *Discipline*.

The title was not found in the earlier records of the bishops, where the body was referred to as

"The Bishops," and the rulings of the body were mentioned as "the Bishops' Rulings," but, more recently, even the publications of "The Bishops" use the title, "the Board of Bishops," and the influence of the common use, found its way into informal and then formal recognitions in publications, and in the *Discipline*.

In a sense, it is practically of no moment whether the parliamentary idea of calling the congregated bishops "The House of Bishops," or the collective or associated idea, in "The College of Bishops," or some other title be used. The important thing is the nature and relation of the body itself, and it is what it has been from the beginning—a distinct and vital body in the economy of The Methodist Episcopal Church. Calling it a "Board" did not make the body of bishops. There always was the episcopal body, or body of bishops and the use of the title "Board" did not add to it any power or any privilege. It continued to be just what it was before the name "Board" came into use. It was the same thing after that event as it had been before, and the thing is more important than the name.

In the book of *Discipline* there are a number of mentions of "The Board of Bishops," but they are all of comparatively recent date, but the history and the law show that from the very beginning of the church the superintendents, or bishops, have been recognized as being a distinct episcopal body, and just as much so as they have been since the doubtful, and not specially dignified word

"Board" has been attached, with its subordinating idea of a minor gathering, like a school board, or a local board of trustees, and with its etymological derivation from a literal board, or plank, out of which, possibly, might be made a table around which a few persons might sit.

It is conceivable that a more appropriate term might be applied to those who are not a minor subdivision, but historically and legally, a distinct and most important body in a great ecclesiasticism.

However, the title exists, but the episcopal body is just the same as it was before somebody called it a Board.

The bishops had vast and various responsibilities, which rested on the single bishop, if there was only one; and, if there were a number of bishops, upon them all; and, at times, it was necessary for these equals to agree among themselves as to what should be done, how it should be done, and by whom it should be done.

When there were only two bishops they conferred together and arranged details of their work, and when their numbers increased they still met from time to time to confer and arrange for holding the Conference and for the discharge of their various duties, and what these were did not depend upon statute law or ordinary legislative processes but upon the Constitution of the church and the established usages, or common law of the episcopacy.

Of this body each minister, when he was made

a bishop, became a member, and he and his brother bishops did not find, nor require, a program, or order of business, prepared by any outside party, but acted upon and according to the duties devolving upon them, and the rights conferred upon them, by the nature of the episcopacy, as in "The plan of our itinerant General Superintendency,"[1] and under the protecting provisions of the written Constitution adopted by the church.

In 1876, Bishop Matthew Simpson, in his *Cyclopædia of Methodism,*[2] said: "The duties of the bishops are to preside in the General and Annual Conferences, and, when present, in the District Conferences also. They arrange the districts for presiding elders, and fix the various appointments of the preachers. They are further required to travel through the church at large, and to oversee the spiritual and temporal interests of the church, to consecrate bishops, and ordain elders and deacons, and to decide questions of law arising in the proceedings of the Annual Conferences; such decisions, however, being subject to an appeal to the ensuing General Conference, but in all cases the application of law is with the Conference. The bishops are also directed to prescribe a course of study on which those applying for admission on trial in the Annual Conference shall be examined, and must be approved before admission, and also to prescribe a course of study and of reading

[1]Constitution, Art. x, §3.

[2]Art. "Bishops," p. 108; Philadelphia, 1881, Fourth Revised Edition.

proper to be pursued by candidates for the ministry for the term of four years."

This condensed statement, of course, needs some modification to make it conform to present-day facts, for it was written sixty-six years ago; but it still gives a fairly comprehensive idea of the duties of the bishops.

Nevertheless, it does not say too much, for such items as arranging the work, distributing the assignments for episcopal visitation, where each bishop is the equal of any other bishop, and fields have their own peculiarities, and hearing the reports from the bishops who have recently administered in the various Conferences, mean a mass of details that may fully tax the best brains and the most sympathetic hearts.

In addition there are interpretations of law and a multitude of affairs that might well astonish even the most intelligent outsider. Naturally, all these matters require meetings for information, study, and consultation, and as the Annual Conferences are divided into the Spring and Fall Conferences, so that they may be held in those seasons according to the convenience of the preachers and people, the bishops have found it judicious to come together at those seasons after the Annual Conferences have been held. These gatherings they call their semi-annual Conferences, the Spring Conference and the Fall Conference. In their Spring Conference they arrange the times for the meetings of the next Fall Annual Conferences, and in their Fall Conference they arrange for the

next Spring Annual Conferences. The dates for the Bishops' Conferences are fixed from time to time by the bishops, and an emergency Conference of bishops may be called at any time.

It may be asked, Who are members of the Board of Bishops? This ought not to be difficult to answer, and that in a few words. In the first place, all bishops who are general superintendents are members of the Board of Bishops, and the names of all are on the roll and are duly called whether they are present or absent, and the failure to be present by distance, or disease, or any other cause does not affect the bishop's membership in the Board.

In the second place, missionary bishops who are at the place where the Board meets are entitled to be present, and, when their fields are under consideration, they are entitled to represent their foreign mission fields. As a matter of practice they always are most welcome and have accorded to them the greatest honor, and when they represent their mission field they are granted a specially designated and unrestricted time.

Probably some of the emphasis which has been put on "general" in "general superintendent" was placed there to mark the distinction between the two classes of bishops, namely, the missionary bishops and the bishops who were general superintendents. The missionary bishop is a genuine bishop with full episcopal powers for his assigned jurisdiction, and, hence, is referred to as a bishop limited to a definite mission field in a foreign

country, which would seem to be a limited episcopacy only in a qualified sense, when it is recalled that the mission may be a continent or a vast country with hundreds of millions of inhabitants. On the other hand, the general superintendent bishop may move through the entire United States and cannot be localized in any particular part, but the actual territory he covers may be only a fraction as large as the jurisdiction of a missionary bishop.

A question of very considerable importance is as to where the Board of Bishops should meet. Can it meet anywhere or everywhere or must it meet within certain limits? The general superintendents are bishops of an American church, "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America." Where, then, should the Board of Bishops meet but in the said United States of America? That is where The Methodist Episcopal Church has its seat of authority, and as the Board of Bishops is part of that government, that is where this Board should convene. Further, that is where the Board of Bishops has always met, and that established usage is part of the common law, and also of the constitutional law, for the usage was from the beginning, and before the written Constitution and was a part of "the plan" of our episcopacy before "the plan of our itinerant General Superintendency" was inserted into the first written Constitution of 1808, and readopted in the new Constitution of 1900.

On the same principle that the Constitution re-

quires the General Conference to convene in the United States of America, the Board of Bishops, as a part of the central church government, must have sittings in the United States and cannot meet outside this country. In addition the law in regard to missionary bishops meeting with the Board of Bishops clearly shows that the Board must meet "in the United States."[1] The Board of Bishops has its seat in the United States of America and has always met in the said United States.

All general superintendent bishops are members of the Board, and though absent on account of distance or any other cause, nevertheless they remain members and "any missionary bishop, who may be in the United States," as the law reads: "When the General Superintendents are making their assignments to the Conferences, any Missionary Bishop who may be in the United States shall sit with them when his field is under consideration."[2] Incidentally this shows that the Board of Bishops is to meet in the United States of America, and has authority over foreign fields.

The church center has always been in the United States of America. The natural inference, therefore, would be that the formal and official meeting of the bishops would be in this country. With this inference the facts of history harmonize, for the authoritative meetings of the bishops, in the Board of Bishops, have always been held in the

[1] *Discipline*, 1920, ¶199, p. 153.
[2] *Ibid.*

United States of America, and these meetings of the Board have always been legally recognized.

The Board of Bishops is a central body, and naturally belongs to the center of the church, which is within the United States of America, as its proper and legal place, and on the same principle that the General Conference is, by the Constitution, forbidden to convene beyond the boundaries of the United States of America, the Board of Bishops should, and must, comply with the same restriction, and so preserve the unity of the episcopacy. The duties and responsibilities of the Board of Bishops have been outlined, and yet it remains to be said that the Board of Bishops has a relation to the foreign mission fields, and that this implies a certain degree of authority.

The law already quoted which says: "When the General Superintendents are making their assignments to the Conferences, any Missionary Bishop who may be in the United States shall sit with them when his field is under consideration, and arrangements shall be made so that once in every quadrennium, and not oftener unless a serious emergency arises, every Mission over which a Missionary Bishop has jurisdiction shall be administered conjointly by a General Superintendent and the Missionary Bishop. In case of a difference of judgment between them the existing status shall continue unless overruled by the General Superintendents who shall have power to decide finally."[1]

[1] *Discipline*, 1920, ¶199, pp. 153, 154.

This refers to the general superintendents sitting in the Board of Bishops, and shows they had to do with the assignment of bishops to preside over the Annual Conferences in missionary jurisdictions, as in what is termed the "Plan of Episcopal Visitation," that this Board of Bishops has power to designate a general superintendent to visit a missionary jurisdiction and administer conjointly, and that also the Board of Bishops, composed of general superintendents, "shall have power to decide finally."

Further power in the Board of Bishops appears in the law which reads as follows: "When a Missionary Bishop, by death or for other cause, ceases to perform episcopal duty for the foreign field to which he was assigned by the General Conference, the General Superintendents shall at once take supervision of said field."[1]

This indicates not only a special power, but also a general authority of the Board of Bishops in relation to foreign missionary jurisdictions. If there is an episcopal vacancy in a foreign jurisdiction the supervision of the field devolves upon the Board of Bishops and it is to provide for the episcopal oversight, so that the work may properly proceed.

This does not mean that any individual bishop shall do this on his own motion, but the general superintendents as a body, or, in other words, the Board of Bishops, shall act, and act according to its judgment in the circumstances, and make

[1] *Discipline*, 1920, ¶202, p. 154.

needed supervision. Neither does it mean the putting of a general superintendent in foreign residence, and the decision is not to be made by the General Conference, but by the Board of Bishops. In the emergency the Board of Bishops gives the field special oversight, but just how this body must determine.

As a matter of fact, the foreign missions have always recognized the Board of Bishops in the United States as the only legal and authoritative Board of Bishops, and bishops in foreign fields have looked to this Board of Bishops to approve and announce the episcopal plan for their Conferences. This is done in the semi-annual publication of the assignments by the Board, and the law previously cited shows this is both law and usage.[1]

Further, the bishops in foreign fields are members of the Board of Bishops in the home land, and they can, and actually do, sit in the Conferences of the Board of Bishops. Three were present in the session last June, three were present six months before that, and all were present at and immediately after the late General Conference of 1920, and always they are most cordially received and treated with the greatest honor, and communications from the bishops in foreign lands are frequently received and always are welcomed.

So the relation of the foreign fields to the Board of Bishops and of the Board of Bishops to the foreign mission fields has always been understood

[1] *Discipline*, 1920, ¶199, p. 153.

and duly recognized by those in the foreign fields, as, for example, in the submission of proposed assignments for Conference presidencies, and, as the law previously cited shows, it is part of the work in the Board of Bishops to make the assignments to the Conferences including those for foreign missions (see *Discipline,* 1920, ¶199, p. 153). There is, however, a desire to consult and accommodate.

Now, as to the relation of the bishops in the foreign fields to the Board of Bishops in the United States of America a new question has been suggested and the suggestion seems to have come from bishops who happen to be in certain parts of Asia, and it seems to have arisen from the fact that a large number of general superintendent bishops have been assigned by the recent General Conference to foreign jurisdictions. It has been pointed out that while twenty-one general superintendents were placed in the United States, the General Conference of 1920 sent seventeen general superintendents to various foreign fields. The mooted question is while there is a Board of Bishops in the United States, may there not be another Board of Bishops, or other Boards of Bishops, outside the United States? In other words, How many Boards of Bishops can there be?

The indicating of the large number of general superintendents in foreign fields, and the pointing out of the fact that the number was nearly equal to the number in the United States, cannot settle the question, for the right of the Board of Bishops

to be anywhere rests upon law and legal principles and it is plain that the Board of Bishops that now exists, and which meets in the United States, has a legal existence. The question, therefore, is not to be determined by numbers, whether large or small. It is equally plain that there is no law for the formation of any other Board of Bishops anywhere. Further, it is clear that no fractional group of bishops anywhere is empowered by constitutional law, or any other law, to declare themselves to be a Board of Bishops of The Methodist Episcopal Church.

These principles being true, no number of general superintendent bishops outside the United States can create a Board of Bishops, at their pleasure, to meet outside the United States, and neither could groups of bishops in foreign countries establish Boards of Bishops in and for foreign countries, and to meet in said foreign lands, and there is no law that empowers any body to create such boards to meet anywhere. The church is one, and there is only one Board of Bishops, and that exists by legal and constitutional right, and that meets in the United States of America, where the central authority of the church is located. Even if other Boards of Bishops could legally be created, there are many practical reasons why it should not be done.

One may call attention to the financial objection and show that for the general superintendents in foreign fields to form one or more Boards of Bishops to meet outside the United States would

greatly increase the cost for episcopal administration and increase the taxation on the whole church.

Suppose all the bishops resident outside the United States were to claim the right of coming together in foreign fields, with the same powers, rights, and privileges, as have been and are possessed by what has long and legally been called the Board of Bishops, it would be a claim never before pressed, or advanced by such bishops. If the bishops in the foreign missions could come together in a foreign country, and make such a foreign Board of Bishops, it would not only make a division among the bishops of the church, but would make what would practically, and actually, be a division of the church itself, which would not end merely in a division of sentiment and practice, but which in all probability, sooner or later, would result in a violent rupture in relations, and, finally, in a separation.

To restate in detail, if the bishops in foreign lands did constitute one or more Boards of Bishops in foreign countries, it would be disastrous in many ways. It would make a division in the episcopacy; it would be an actual separation from the general superintendents, and the general superintendency in the United States of America; and it would be formally and actually antagonistic to the other bishops, and would probably develop direct, and even personal, antagonisms between the bishops of the foreign fields and those in the Boards of Bishops sitting in the United States.

It follows, therefore, that the Episcopacy being

a unit, the Board of Bishops must meet as a unity. To have Boards of Bishops meeting in many parts of the world would break this unity and lead to diverse, contradictory, and even antagonistic deliverances and administration, which would result in confusion and injury to the church. Under the law it seems plain that with the Board of Bishops in the United States there cannot be other Boards of Bishops, with similar or identical powers in foreign countries. The bishops abroad have no legal authority for establishing one or more Boards of Bishops in foreign lands. There is no authority for such an act in the Constitution, in the statute law, or in established usage, and, if general superintendents abroad claim that because they are general superintendents they have the faintest shadow of a right to do anything of this sort, that would be a very good reason for not placing general superintendents in foreign residences. The proposition, or even suggestion, to have one or more Boards of Bishops outside the United States of America should not, and, doubtless, will not, receive the approval of the church. It would destroy the unity of the episcopacy and would result in ecclesiastical chaos. For such a Board to come together from Asia, Europe, Africa, and South America would be impracticable, and certainly would be no easier, than for all to meet in the Board in the United States of America.

There is, however, another thing that can be done, and which may meet the real desire, and

which may be cheerfully conceded, and that is the meeting of bishops in given foreign mission fields at such times as they may deem proper. In foreign countries bishops need to consult and arrange their work. Immediate and future needs make it desirable, but this is not a Board, and this really is no new thing for it has actually been done. But even such a meeting should have its limits, for if it were too comprehensive with too large a representative character, it would defeat its own purpose. Distance, expense, and the diverse character of the work in different fields would forbid such a wide and miscellaneous gathering. Plainly, bishops coming together from different continents would not be advisable to what should be a local consideration, while its impracticability must be apparent. For the same reasons it may be improper to attempt such a meeting for a large foreign continent.

Even in Asia, where there are more bishops than in any other foreign continent, practical difficulties are many, and add immensely to economic and other objections, and there the various fields are too widely separated, and too diverse in their composition, government, language, and other peculiarities to make a genuine administrative unity, and such radical differences in locality and racial peculiarities would seem to call for a number of local gatherings for local study and local concentration, rather than for a large meeting for a general and miscellaneous survey and mixed executive action.

Then there are certain legal conditions that must determine what should and can be done. Thus these foreign countries are divided by General Conference into defined foreign missionary jurisdictions, and to each jurisdiction designated bishops are assigned and in which they are to labor. That the bishops of a jurisdiction may come together for consultation in regard to their field should be conceded, but there is no law for assembling other and remote missionary jurisdictions and administering conjointly in foreign lands. As a matter of fact there is no field called "Asia," in the legal provisions of the *Discipline* of the church, under which all general superintendents resident anywhere in that continent could claim to be in the same foreign mission field.

The legal enactments show that the continent of Asia has been divided into a number of fields distinctly designated, and that there is no field designated by the word "Asia." The General Conference has made and indicated these fields by definite titles.

There is Eastern Asia, with the divisions North China, West China, Central China, Foochow, Hinghua, and Yenping Conferences; and grouped with these is what is styled Japan-Korea. These make the division called Eastern Asia, where the late General Conference assigned four bishops.

A second group is called Southern Asia, with the South India Conference, the English-speaking Mission, the Bombay Conference, the Central Provinces Conferences, the Bengal Conference,

the Burma Conference, the North India Conference, and the Northwest India Conference. To this field the General Conference assigned four bishops.

Then there is a third group which is called Southeastern Asia, with the Philippine Islands Conference, the Malaysia Conference, and the Netherlands India Mission Conference, and to it two bishops were assigned.

The General Conference has made these three distinct and different fields, and, while bishops within a homogeneous field may come together and confer, there seems to be no authority for creating a Board of Bishops containing all the bishops of the diverse, distinct, and distant fields of Asia, and attempting to divide indiscriminately the work between remote bishops, as, for example between those of Korea and China and those of India, and *vice versa*. Distance and diversity of interests forbid. Consider the great distances, the vast territories, the overwhelming populations and the babel of tongues in these immense Asiatic fields. Take China with its four hundred million inhabitants, its diverse dialects and major languages, its background of a very ancient civilization, and its struggle to adapt itself to new conditions. Take India with her three hundred millions of miscellaneous peoples speaking many tongues with the memory and fact of long ages of art and learning, her history covering long and marvelous centuries, and now a new restlessness which may betoken a new birth and a better life

or a clash and crash of races and religions which may end in chaos.

Consider these things and one must conclude that the bishops of Eastern Asia have quite enough to do if they master the situation and adequately perform their duty in Eastern Asia, without attempting to take on the problems of Southern Asia, and that, on the other hand, the bishops of Southern Asia have more than enough to do in that region without undertaking to direct or participate in the operation of the missions in Eastern Asia.

Evidently, there is no need for the bishops in such diverse and distant fields to meet together to crowd on each other the problems which belong to fields other than their own. Much better must it be that they take the time and energy to study and operate their own field.

Then as to the matter of a bishop of one of these great fields going into another and different field to temporarily administer the work therein, work with which he is not familiar, and leave his work in his own foreign mission field to a bishop of some other mission field, it does not prove prudence, wisdom, or economy of knowledge and experience. Further fitness in one's own foreign field does not prove preparation for or adaptation to another and almost infinitely different field, and repetitions of such exchanges in administration must work to the detriment of both fields.

For the bishops within a given foreign field to meet and confer about the details of the work in

their own field is not only proper but highly desirable, because it is one field, and to it they were assigned, but for bishops of different and presumably non-homogeneous mission fields to come together as a Board of Bishops or anything akin thereto, is something that is not meditated by the law of the church, and in the very nature of things, and for the purposes of the assignment in foreign countries, should not be attempted.

The letter under consideration says that it emanates from "the Bishops resident in Asia," and it is perfectly correct that the bishops indicated do reside at points within the continent of Asia, but the acts of the General Conference do not create or recognize that title, they do not group these bishops in one field, and nowhere is there a field which is called "Asia." As may easily be seen the General Conference did mark out three distinct fields: First, Eastern Asia; second, Southern Asia; and third, Southeastern Asia. This is not hypercriticism, or any kind of criticism, but simply a statement of fact. They all were not put into one combined field, but three separate fields were created, manifestly for the purpose of having them kept separate and of operating them separately, and there is no authorization of any right to combine the three separate fields into one field, or into one episcopal missionary jurisdiction. The facts and the law do not sanction the idea or fact of a combined Asia, or anything like a Board of Bishops made up of "Bishops resident in Asia."

Even if it might be advisable to have exchanges of episcopal administration in all of the mission fields in Asia, it does not follow that the exchange assignments should or could be made by the bishops resident in foreign countries. That should be done by a centralized authority representing the unity of the whole church, as episcopal assignments have been made by the Board of Bishops of the church. Suggestions have come from bishops in foreign mission fields, but the official episcopal assignments have been made and announced by the Board of Bishops.

The arrangement among the bishops of one foreign mission field is one thing; but an arrangement to exchange episcopal jurisdiction or administration into other and widely separated foreign mission fields is a very different thing, and to have it done by bishops who are assigned to foreign fields, for themselves and by themselves, is contrary to the genius of the episcopal system.

The right for bishops in foreign mission fields to do it in any set or self-combination of foreign fields would carry with it the right to make such exchange adjustments in all foreign fields, which would mean confusion and a breaking away from the established constitutional authority of the church through its Board of Bishops. If a group of bishops outside the United States of America could do that with themselves, it would tend to episcopal anarchy, and all bishops in foreign countries could unite and send themselves for exchange administration from one continent to

another, from Asia to Africa, and Africa to Asia, and from South and Central America to Europe, and from Europe to any other continent, or in any order or direction they pleased. A blind man can see that the tendency would be to a hasty and violent disruption of the church, a separation into fragments and probably a generally chaotic condition. All of which proves the wisdom and necessity of the Board of Bishops at the center of the church.

In all this it is to be remembered that while the United States is one great field, the foreign countries have been divided into a number of missionary fields, and that there is a different status in the foreign fields and the home church. Further, as far as these principles are concerned, it makes no difference whether those who take part in the actions are general superintendent bishops or any other kind of bishops. Laws and principles are to determine and not the episcopal title.

The bishops, or general superintendents of The Methodist Episcopal Church are duly elected by the General Conference and solemnly consecrated before the church and Almighty God, and passing into the body of the bishops they become members of what is termed the Board of Bishops.

This Board contains the chief executives of the church, the bishops, who, in association are organized and oversee the spiritual and temporal affairs of the church, interpret the laws of the church for each quadrennium, and inspire the church in its various departments.

For their existence as a body, or Board, they are not indebted to any power less than the whole church, but become a body, or Board of Bishops, by the fact that they are bishops, and as such they stand out as one of the great bodies in the Constitutional economy of the denomination, with powers and privileges, as well as responsibilities, that no other single body in the church can affect or change.

To recapitulate we may say: First, what is technically, and legally known as "The Board of Bishops," has under some well-understood title, existed from the beginning of the church. Second, the Board of Bishops has its center in the United States of America, where its meetings are held, and always have been held. Third, as the church is a unit, there is only one Board of Bishops. Fourth, no other Board of Bishops can be established anywhere else, either in the United States, or in the foreign fields. Fifth, bishops in foreign missions may meet for consultation in regard to the details of their own immediate fields. Sixth, since the General Conference has marked out certain fields in foreign countries, and since particular bishops have been assigned to these definite fields, the meetings of bishops in the foreign work should be made up of the bishops in the particular field, within the bounds of the Central Mission Conference to which the particular bishops belong, and there is no law permitting Episcopal gatherings or exchanges beyond these defined foreign fields.

CHAPTER VIII

PRESENT CONSIDERATIONS

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The present we can see and know. The future we may not certainly know, but, with the facts of the past and the present, we may forecast the future. Through our knowledge of cause and effect, with the law of sequence and probability before us, we may fairly perceive the possibilities beyond the present, and determine and provide for the future.

These laws work out in individual affairs, in business, in the community and the nation, and apply equally well to the church generally, and to its various projects, including its missions in foreign countries, among other races and among people of other political ideas and other civilizations.

The church in the home land has its purposes in the interest of foreign missions, and it has its machinery for carrying out these projects, at the same time the foreign mission has its mechanism and workers endeavoring to realize the hopes of the home church.

Much has been accomplished, but the home church peers into the future and wonders what the future will be. It takes an account of stock and tries to strike a balance. It asks, What more can

be done, how can it be done, and how may the burden be lightened in one field so that greater effort may be turned into some other field? Then the difficulties and uncertainties spring up and a smoke screen seems to hide the future.

We have gone so far and we aim to go further. When, and how far, we shall go, in a degree, depends on ourselves and circumstances.

So to speak, a great, dense, and dark forest is before us. It must be penetrated, charted, and opened up to the light. If we are to go through, we need a path. If there is no path, then one must be made. If there is no path, then we need a compass, and, even if there is a path, we should have a compass to tell us the direction and to enable us to determine whither the path leads. There must be something on which we can depend, at least with some degree of certainty.

When we have no definite knowledge we must have a principle which may guide us, even if it is only like the ray of light from the little lantern, which reveals step by step, one step at a time, but which at last leads to our destination.

We have the church and we have the foreign mission field, and in the dark there is much beyond, but we are not helpless. We have had the past, its memory still is with us, and something has been learned. With the past and the present right principles may be found and they may be our guides.

We must not forget the past, and we must learn and know present facts. Then, with reliable prin-

ciples, we may penetrate difficulties and mold and control the future.

In them we may find a right historical, legal, and constitutional basis, and in them we may find the reliable compass to point out the right direction in which we should go. That is safer than to follow sudden impulses and wild suggestions.

Experience is a dear teacher, it is said, but it is a teacher, though a costly one, and those who have paid the price may have learned. So the church has had some experience in foreign missions and should have learned something. From that the church may profit in the future.

Even failures may carry most valuable lessons, and one is against a poorly informed, rash, and dangerous leadership. One of these lessons is not to tear up every old thing to make way for every new and untried thing, but to "prove all things and hold fast to that which is good."

In the matter of foreign missions, under the lead of a few, or the lack of leadership in the many, the church now and then has wandered from the right path, and strayed into the maze of the jungle and wasted energy and precious time. Even General Conferences have been misguided, and have gone astray, but though the penalty was great, for it meant cost and loss, nevertheless there may have been ultimate profit from the severe experience.

Here is where wisdom must come into action. The time of mistake and disaster is not the time for unthinking excitement, but for calmness and

intense thought, for the church will not recover herself and regain what has been lost by wildly rushing into the thickets of bad advice.

What is needed is not to go on plunging into darker tangles and calling it progress. The thing to do is first to get back to the right path by moving in the right direction, and then, when it has found its bearings and is once more on the right path, the church may push forward on a genuine advance.

Sometimes thinking is better than action, especially when the action is aimless movement in a circle, and sometimes the best thing to do is not to press forward, but to go back and get on the right path, which may mean the throwing away of the new entangling notion and taking up an old method which had been discarded—the old thing which had proved itself to be good.

The church to-day is where it needs calm consideration as to what is best to be done. This is not the time so much for excessive enthusiasm, but to have a clear head and a clear eye, to reason and to perceive. Enthusiasm is always needed but headless excitement does not bring enduring success. Think-fests may be more needed than talk-fests, and thinking must precede action. The church should seek and reexamine certain fundamental facts in regard to itself and some of its activities. One primary fact it should fix is the right relation of the church to its foreign missions, and then the right relation of these foreign missions to the church. The church is the chief thing,

and the independent entity, while the foreign is a form of its activity.

The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America existed before it had any foreign mission. In a sense this church was a complete church when the United States was its only field, and it could have gone on doing a good and great work, if it had continued to occupy and labor in no other territory.

Then came the expanding view, and the venture into parts of the world beyond the boundaries of the United States of America, and the planting in one and more places of the seeds of Christian truth and its cultivation in these new gardens of the Lord. Then the church increasingly gave her men and means to carry the gospel and to induce the inhabitants of foreign land to accept and live in conformity with Christ's truth, and the church continued to care for and develop the new converts to Christianity. So the church had taken upon itself the oversight of foreign missions, but the church never lost its entity and that entity continued to exist independently of its missions in foreign lands.

The church was first, and later followed the mission beyond the territory of the home church. Without the home church these particular foreign missions would not have been started, and without the church these foreign missions at the beginning could not have been sustained; and now, as these foreign missions are fostered by the home church, the most important thing to these foreign

missions is the home church, but it remains plain that the home church is one thing, and the foreign mission is another thing, though they work together. Hence, there are two fundamental facts to be considered: first, The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, and, second, the relations between the mother church and the dependent foreign missions; and these relations imply the duty of the church to the foreign missions, and the duty of these missions to the mother church.

It is necessary to keep in view the constant distinction between the home church and its foreign mission. The one is the creator; the other is the created institution, so they are not exactly the same. The church was an independent entity. It existed as such before it had any mission in a foreign country, and it could thus exist if again it had no foreign mission now or in the future.

Churches, or denominations, have existed without foreign missions, and yet were properly regarded as true churches. It may be said that today a church would not be doing its full duty if it did not support foreign missions. That may not be disputed, but that is not the point now under discussion. We are not saying that the church in a Christian land would be meeting its full obligation, if it had no foreign mission; but it might be claimed that a church would have a right to decide for itself what form of support of foreign missions it would give; for example, as to whether it would control and carry on a foreign mission,

or whether, instead of controlling an organization called its own, it would give its money to foreign missions carried on by other bodies or individuals.

We are not advocating the latter form of missionary support, but merely showing an alternative method, and a method which has been pursued by The Methodist Episcopal Church, for example, as it contributed to the support of Wesleyan missions in France when it had no work of its own in that country, and now, as it does by its gifts to, and through, the Independent Church of Japan. Of course, in such cases, it cannot exercise organic control. So there are recognized alternatives, and the method to be used may be a matter of judgment and of circumstances.

Returning to the thought started above. The home church was an entity before it had any foreign mission, it continued to preserve its entity after it had foreign missions, and its original entity would continue to exist if it ceased to have any foreign mission.

The Methodist Episcopal Church had a mission in Canada, and, when that mission became independent, still the entity of the original church continued; and once it had a mission in Japan, but when the Japanese work became independent, the entity of The Methodist Episcopal Church was not affected in any particular. So if all concluded that they would be better and do better if independent, and withdrew from its direct relationship to the mother church, The Methodist Episco-

pal Church would continue to be the same entity it was when it was organized as a church in the United States.

The chief point is, first, that there is a home church, and this is the most vital thing; second, that this now called home church is as complete an ecclesiastical entity as it ever was; third, that this entity of the home church can exist with, or without foreign missions; and, fourth, that this church entity must be maintained in its independence both for itself and the work it may do for others.

If it should chance that in any way this independence were destroyed, say by the intervention of individual or massed power, for example, from without the United States of America, it would be the practical and actual overthrow of The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, a possibility never intended or dreamed of by the founders of the church. If ever that independent entity is lost, through outside or inside force, or in any way, that would mean the destruction or loss of the original church, and the church owes it to itself, and for the good of the world to protect itself from such dangers, no matter in what form they may appear.

The danger may exist in many forms, and the approach is likely to be insidious and unsuspected, and the injury may be done before the impending danger is perceived, and, that being the case, it behooves every one in the church to be on guard, and alert to defend against surprise, and the

greatest dangers are sometimes in little things which seem to be innocent and for which the best motives may be claimed.

Not only must the independence of the home church be preserved, but also the home church in the United States must be maintained in strength. This appears particularly in its relation to the support of foreign missions, for if the home church became impoverished, the gifts contributed for missions in foreign lands would inevitably be diminished. The depleting of the home church, if that were possible, might be fatal to many missions abroad. We say "if possible," but we can imagine a depleted church, and we need only think of countries now suffering from a long-continued and exhausting war, to see that the possibility is not a mere imagination, and there may be other causes besides war.

Then a depleted home church would not be able to do its own work well at home. There is where the home church must be most vigorous. There the life forces must be at their best and all forms of church activity must be carried on with power and ease. The individual must have a healthy heart, and it must work normally and well, if the man is to do his full part, and no matter what he may be in other respects a weak and diseased heart is a most serious handicap. So the outside activities of the church require that its heart in the home church shall always be kept at its best.

Various things within the home church might affect it, as might circumstances in the home

country; and even the management of home affairs might enervate and exhaust, and, therefore, managers must consider the capabilities of local churches, so that burdens will not be too heavy, the true perspective will be preserved, and the various activities will be properly balanced.

Demands on the people for money, and even for service must be governed by as perfect knowledge of the churches as can be obtained. It may be said that the church does not give too much or do too much, or, as some put it, the church does not do enough or give enough. That is not worth an argument, but the generalization may be pressed too far and injustice may be done individuals here and there, and the injustice may work injury to many persons and result in irreparable damage to the church.

Even in the matter of apportionments of money to be raised and appeals for liberal giving, the best of judgment is necessary. The amount must be within reasonable limits and the contributions of the individual and the church must be free gifts freely given.

Everything like coercion should be avoided. Not merely coercion, but anything like coercion, has no place in an American Protestant church, that is to say, no righteous place. Circumstances from without the church have brought imitations within the church, and it may take a long time for the churches to get over the evil effects of their introduction.

The government may tax, but that ought not to

be the churchly method. Yet people in the church speak of a tax placed upon them. This may need qualification, but the feeling may be the same, though they may modify and say it is like a tax. If it were possible to tax a church so that the members had to pay an excessive, or over tax, by over-persuasion or constraint of any kind, it may easily be seen that the church might be financially weakened and exhausted, and it might require a long time for the church to readjust and recover from the reaction.

In missionary and other benevolent appeals, the best judgment and the warmest Christian charity must be used, and it must be remembered that no amount of money, no matter how large—even millions or billions of dollars—will instantaneously convert all the heathen world. The movement must be gradual, though it may be relatively rapid.

The cause must be presented and the best results secured, but the church must not oppress, or use any form of duress to compel the giving or to destroy the freedom of the giver. Not compulsion but free giving is the ideal.

There should be a most careful study of present facts and conditions in the foreign missions, that the church may ascertain what should be done for the church and these missions now and in the near future, and the study should bring to light what is being, and what is to be, proposed.

One remarkable suggestion is a proposition that all the connectional boards of the church should

extend their operations directly into the foreign mission fields.

Of course it is well understood that the Board of Foreign Missions and the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society have in all the years of their existence been operating in the foreign fields, so the proposition must refer to the other boards.

Certain bishops in Asia have expressed the "conviction that the time has come to expand the activities of all the connectional boards to the whole church."

This looks like a fair proposition, and in the line of progress. That these bishops in their distant continent present the suggestion may be regarded as a fact in its favor, while others may have a question against it because nearly all the bishops are young and earnest, and had been only a very short time on their fields. However, whatever may be thought of it at first sight, it should be carefully considered. Objection has already been entered, which shows that consideration has already begun.

The editor of the *Pacific Christian Advocate,* referring to the suggestion of "the Asian Bishops at Singapore," says, in the issue for August 9, 1922:

"They made a plea for the world extension of practically all the benevolent boards. Surely, they could not have given the matter due reflection; it would be dreadful to carry over into every mission field the duplication of boards to be found in this country and to have a multitude of secre-

taries crossing and recrossing the seven seas on tours of inspection. . . . This must never be. . . . One American agency plus the bishop is all that non-American Methodists ought to be compelled to deal with.'"[1]

On the other hand, those bishops take a different point of view "In view of the rapid development of our Methodist Episcopal Church into a world-wide organization, with large Annual Conferences, educational institutions, vast property interests, and a growing consciousness of international solidarity,"[2] they think all the connectional Boards should act in the foreign fields just as they do in the United States of America.

Most people reading the words quoted above would find a rush of questions rising in their minds and would want to know just what the several statements mean.

For example, just what is meant by that "international solidarity," and what has it to do with the church boards that act within the church in the United States? Of course the statement is that "international solidarity" is an existing fact. If so there cannot be a consciousness of it. But is "international solidarity" an actual fact and is our nation in it? Our nation has not voted that way. That was not Washington's teaching, and President Wilson said: "North America should live her own life. Washington saw it when he wrote his Farewell Address," and "It was not

[1]Issue of August 9, 1922, p. 10.
[2]Printed Communication, 1922, p. 13.

merely because of passing and transient circumstances that Washington said we must keep from entangling alliances.''[1]

The wars since the Great War show that there is little or no ''international solidarity'' in Europe and the repeated failures in the conferences of European diplomats in Genoa, The Hague, and in London, give evidence of the lack of ''international solidarity.'' The United States helps the nations, even including its former enemies, but it has not cemented any political solidarity, and nations tremble through fear of a break between Great Britain and France. The present ''solidarity'' among the nations is rather weak to make what is not a fact the basis of an argument for commanding the ''connectional Boards'' in the United States to change their legal nature and elongate their activities so as to directly reach the foreign mission fields.

What the ''large Annual Conferences'' in the United States have to do with the question is somewhat mysterious, for there is nothing glorious in combining two or more fair-sized Annual Conferences into a huge body that cannot be accommodated in an ordinary church building. It has lost history and historic association, and some say even brotherhood, and gained only bulk. Generally, it was a bad thing to do. But what reason does it make for changing a United States Board and sending it into foreign parts?

[1]Bishop Thomas B. Neely's *The League, the Nation's Danger*, Philadelphia, 1919, p. 111.

The reference to "educational institutions and vast property interests" is also rather bewildering. These vast interests are generally in the United States, and they might form an argument for keeping the United States Boards at work in the United States, and we see no intimation that the properties in the foreign missions are not properly and securely held, and there is no statement to the effect that these United States Connectional Boards are needed to securely hold the church properties in foreign lands.

The only other point left is "the rapid development of our Methodist Episcopal Church into a world-wide organization." This needs explanation and study. If this, however, is going on at such a rate, while the United States Boards are still in the United States, it would seem that there is no necessity for sending them abroad to accelerate the speed.

But has the Methodist Episcopal Church become "a world-wide organization," and, if so, what are the proofs of this "rapid development"? What is "a world-wide organization," when did it begin, and what will it end in? Is it any more of a world-organization than it was, say about fifty-five years ago, for example, in 1868?

The first weakness in the notion of The Methodist Episcopal Church being "a world-wide organization" is in the simple fact that it is not "a world-wide organization" at all. It does not govern the whole world and it does not cover all the world. It never was intended to be a world-gov-

ernment actually governing the wide world, and it is not such a government. From its center it is not the imperial ruler of the ecclesiastical world and everywhere, and it is not a combination of the world that rules the world everywhere and The Methodist Episcopal Church at its center.

When The Methodist Episcopal Church had no foreign missions it was The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America. Then the only territory it touched was the United States and it was plainly the church in and of the United States. But when it undertook to send the gospel to Liberia it did not cease to be the church in the United States. Neither did it when it began sending the gospel to South America; and neither did it when it sent the gospel to China.

It merely became The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America with missions in foreign parts, and the church in the United States was one thing and the mission outside the United States was another. The distinction between the two, the home church and the mission, was manifest and was clearly understood both by the church and by the mission.

The foreign mission did not govern the church in the United States, but the church in the United States governed the foreign mission, but because it sent the gospel to Liberia it did not become "a world-wide organization." Neither did it when it sent the gospel to South America, neither did it when it sent the gospel to China, and neither has it since it has added a few more places; and now

that it is in spots and points of influence here and there, it is not "world-wide" in any sense.

If having missions here and there outside the United States makes the church "a world-wide organization," that could have been claimed when it had only one, two, or three missions abroad; but nobody made such claim. It required the abnormal mental conditions of recent years, to imagine or invent "the rapid development of our Methodist Episcopal Church into a world-wide organization."

A great and radical change like that cannot be affected by popular errors of speech, or fads of ambition or imagination, or the reiteration of current phrases such as "a world-wide organization" or "a world church," or even by a blunder in statutory legislation. That is a matter that belongs to the organic law, and every well-informed person should know that in this particular the Constitution of the church has never been changed.

The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America remains as always an American church, at one time without any foreign missions and now with some missions in foreign countries, and now without some she once had. These incidents or accidents do not change the essential fact, as the history shows. When Canada went off, the church was intact in the United States of America, and, when Japan went off, the church in the United States remained the same; and so, if it takes on more mission fields abroad, or loses all her foreign missions, the church remains the same

Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

The suggestion about extending the scope of "all the connectional Boards," and turning them all, with all their machinery, into the foreign mission fields, is based on a wrong principle and overlooks some very important practical and legal facts.

It not only ignores, but antagonizes the great historic and legal fact of a distinction between the home church in the United States and the missions in foreign countries. Further, it advocates the blotting out of these distinctions between the home and the foreign fields, and tends to rush the church and to force it into being "a world-wide organization," the very thing The Methodist Episcopal Church should never be.

This individual instance of having the "connectional Boards" in the United States swung into the foreign countries, means that there should remain no distinction between the foreign mission and the home church, and that the administration of the affairs of the church in the United States should be on the level of the foreign missions and that they should be, as they never have been carried on since they came into existence.

Anyone, however, who is familiar with the facts must know that the foreign missions are different from the church in the United States and that they differ from each other, so that there must be differences in administration.

The suggestion of making radical changes in

the "connectional Boards" may to some minds look like a matter of little moment, but vital principles are involved. If carried out, it will mean confusion in the several societies and in the home church, with added labor and intensified confusion in the foreign missions.

What is more than mere inference is the demonstration many have had in the more or less recent past, for some have a vivid recollection of the history of the tinkering with the various benevolent boards of the church which have gone through various processes of combination and decombination followed by recombination, and then another dissolution of partnership, and all with a loss of efficiency, and money, and prestige; and it is known that a good and useful society became utterly lost and has never been found. Some people seem always ready for a jumble and a rumble of the "connectional Boards," and find a delight in shifting and shuffling these bodies and changing this or that office. It may be that something chanced to turn up for the better, but that must have been a rare result, for usually there have been ludicrous blunders and sad failures and a new composition has been followed by decomposition, and then by an attempted restoration. Indeed, any one who has an accurate knowledge of these experiments should be pardoned, if like the editor of the *Pacific Christian Advocate,* he, figuratively speaking, throws up his hands in horror at the idea of another shuffle in the connectional Boards. The injury caused by former attempts

should call a halt on any propositions of this character.

Each Board should have its own mission and be free to make its own appeal and disburse its own funds, and the people can intelligently and independently make their own response. A little study will show that, generally speaking, all the benevolent societies, excepting the Board of Foreign Missions, and, later, the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society were created in and for the home church, in the United States, and not for the foreign missionary fields.

The Board of Home Missions and Church Extension was for the homeland. It was incorporated in Pennsylvania, with headquarters in Philadelphia, and the law recites: "Its purpose shall be to prosecute missionary work in accordance with the terms of the Charter, in the United States and its possessions, not including the Philippine Islands." What place has that in the foreign mission fields? It is American and for the United States of America and cannot give money to territory not covered by the American flag, and in one instance cannot give where the flag does fly.

The Board of Education is "to diffuse the blessing of education and Christianity throughout the United States." So other boards were for the home church. The Sunday School Board and the Tract Society were primarily for the United States, but years ago they made donations to foreign fields but did not interfere with their administration.

Notwithstanding these facts the church did not neglect the foreign mission fields, for these missions received assistance along all these lines, and they had a society that provided for everything. That society was the Foreign Missionary Society, or Board of Foreign Missions. This Board was and is the link between the home church and the foreign fields, or, if the figure is preferred, the main channel of communication between the church and the foreign missions, and it embraced all of the things mentioned in its care for the foreign missionary work, and so it continues to function. It is a Church Extension Society and it builds churches in foreign missions. It is an Education Society and creates schools and colleges and sustains them for the foreign missions, and, so, it does everything else for these missions as far as its funds permit.

The Foreign Mission Board has been doing all this, and more, for many years, and now to rush in all the other Boards, regardless of this concentrated and unified action of this time-honored Board, seems to show a lack of appreciation or understanding of what the Board of Foreign Missions is for and what it has done, and is calculated to develop inexpressible commotion and confusion. With the foreign Boards these other United States Boards are unnecessary. It combines the work of all.

In this age of dash and recklessness, the church is in as much danger as the state. When foundations are being weakened and swept away it is no

time for carelessness in church affairs. Every proposition should be severely scrutinized and no strange thing should pass without challenge. Many wild things will brazenly demand adoption and a measure of suspicion may be needed. We should heed the exhortation: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."[1]

[1] 1 Thess. 5. 21.

CHAPTER IX

THE FUTURE OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

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Some intelligent and highly respected people who have made a careful and conscientious study of humanity and world conditions, and a sympathetic survey of foreign missions, hold, and say that sooner or later the missions of The Methodist Episcopal Church in foreign countries should be made independent churches within the bounds of their respective nationalities, and they predict that this will be done.

But, if that is correct, nevertheless there is no good reason why the independence should come out of chaos caused by breaking down the constitutional episcopacy and the church polity that has done so much for the spread and success of the church both at home and abroad. If it should come, or is to come, it is better that it come in an orderly and fraternal way as among friends who are to remain friends, or as a natural evolution, rather than in the confusion of a catastrophe brought on by those who thought they were helping in the work of the church. That there are tendencies toward independence in the foreign missions must be patent to every intelligent observer who has been in position to see and has had capacity to perceive and comprehend passing events.

Looking back into the early years, it requires

only a little knowledge of our church and missionary history to know that the Canadian missions to the north of us amicably separated from The Methodist Episcopal Church and formed a church of their own within their own political boundaries.

Only a little more of the later history tells us that our missions in Japan became independent by mutual agreement, and that now there is a Methodist Church of Japan with its own discipline and episcopacy, a Methodist Episcopal Church in Japan, for the people of Japan, within the bounds of the Japanese empire and directed by its own Japanese membership.

Quite at the very beginning of its history, The Methodist Episcopal Church became a separatist and absolutely independent, by severing its relation with Wesley and the mother organization in Great Britain. This may be said to have been done in two ways and at two different times. First, when the American Methodists organized themselves into The Methodist Episcopal Church in America; and, second, when they rescinded the resolution pledging their continution of their connection with their fellow Wesleyans in Great Britain, and their governmental obedience to their reverend founder John Wesley.

With that example and precedent before them it should not seem surprising that the offspring of The Methodist Episcopal Church in foreign lands and at considerable distance from the mother church would feel free to withdraw from the sheltering and fostering fireside of the olden time, and

to set up ecclesiastical housekeeping for themselves. The Methodist Episcopal Church had announced the principles between the home church and the home self-government on the one hand, and work in foreign fields and foreign governments on the other.

So in their turn The Methodist Episcopal Missions in Canada in 1828, and those in Japan in 1907, severed their connection with the mother church, The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, and formed their own Episcopal Methodist Churches within their own national territory, and all parties concerned expressed satisfaction.

Now, does anybody suppose that no other foreign mission will ever separate and become an independent Methodist organization? The reasons that caused the movements for independence in the countries named now exist and grow in other lands and are likely to assert themselves at almost any time. When they do we should not be startled or greatly disturbed. We ourselves enunciated the principle and set the example. Humanity has always cried out for liberty and demanded self-government. In the last three or four years the aspiration has gained greater strength. One might say that it has been stronger than ever before. The Great War and its accompanying diplomacy has stimulated it, and the popular teaching of the right of "self-determination" has encouraged local assertion of racial and other claims. The result is seen in the rising of many small

groups of people and the formation of new nations and governments, sometimes perhaps not wisely, but people want what they want, and because they want a thing they demand it, and, often, simply because they demand it, they get it. Thus we see peoples rising here and there. It may not be a question of propriety or justice. These points we are not discussing. We are merely pointing out facts and conditions.

There are upheavals in Egypt, in India, and in other countries—one may say in every continent and almost in every country. This is an age with an intensified spirit of nationality, racial consciousness, and the dislike of all rule, and especially foreign rules.

These racial and national aspirations tending to revolution, sanguinary or peaceful, in the state, naturally will have some corresponding manifestations in the church. Such results have been seen in the recent years whose shadow still enshroud us, and old ecclesiasticisms have felt the effect. Such things are to be expected in both church and state, for the same kind of people who are in the state are also in the church, and the same people in the nation who say we will not have the government of the foreign race are likely to say we will not be governed by the foreign church, and so may arise the desire and the demand for a church within the nation and of the nation. Canada felt some of that sentiment, and, likewise, did Japan, and others may have the same feeling.

Premonitions have already been observed in

more than one mission and more than one continent. In some places preachers and people have openly expressed something more than a wish for self-government. Some have practically demanded that they shall have bishops of their own race, and they have demanded a generous share of other official positions for their own kind of people. They may be very grateful for what missionaries have brought them and done for them, but they think that having been taught and having learned their lesson, they now have reached the point where they can take care of themselves. These facts have been recognized and efforts have been made to give more local official positions to natives in their respective countries. That this will entirely satisfy the yearning for power and independence is more than doubtful.

Various movements in India illustrate strengthening racial demands, and are more than a mere suggestion of realignment, and the *Central Christian Advocate* tells that "There is going on in China a movement which in the near future may produce the phenomenon of a distinctive Chinese church—we almost wrote it Chinese Christianity," and another publication states that "observers familiar with the situation" say that "China is at the moment laying the foundation for a national Chinese church," which some say "may one day reteach the principles of Christianity to those from whom she learned them."[1]

Not long ago there was a National Christian

[1] *The Literary Digest*, September 9, 1922.

Conference, held in Shanghai, in which were five hundred sixty-five Chinese delegates, and it is stated that this Conference "not only inaugurated steps for the establishment of a national Christian Church free of the denominationalism of the West, but adopted a program which for sheer Christian spirit may well be numbered among historic religious documents." Such instances show that what we have indicated as the trend in foreign Christian missions is well within the facts, and that much stronger statements might be made.

That the foreign missions are becoming different in some respects from the home church must be apparent to the student who is familiar with these affairs. Doubtless some of these differences grow out of local peculiarities which belong to the differences in race, in heredity, in tradition, in education, and in national government, peculiarities that naturally tend to self-assertion and ultimately to ecclesiastical independence. We are not saying that no concessions should be made in view of these conditions, but are merely pointing out the facts as they exist.

Beyond this, however, it may seem strange to note that some things have been done by missionaries, and even by the General Conference, that increase and foster these differences and gradually make the foreign mission more and more unlike the home church. Sometimes there is direct legislation, decision, or some precedent which on a given point makes the law abroad different from the corresponding law at home, and it may be said

that at the time of the legislation or transaction the bearing and effect of the act are not generally recognized.

We are not now inquiring as to whether these things are right or wrong, but simply indicating that they exist. It may be claimed that they are inevitable and that the different nature of the work in the foreign field necessitates the different law or the different usage. In some cases this may be correct, but in others it may not be so clear. Whatever may be the cause, the tendency seems plain.

However, variations in a number of things may be seen, and so frequently that there is a manifest tendency to do differently abroad from what is done at home. As suggested, perhaps in some things this may seem right and may be held to be right, but it may go too far and weaken the bonds between the foreign mission and the home church. Then, if the variations are right, and the break comes, of course those who have sanctioned the differences should not complain.

Things have been done that if they go on will make the missions in foreign lands dissimilar from the mother church in America. If this tendency to difference in laws and usages is a necessity and must go on, the probable outcome may easily be perceived, for, when it matures, like the ripened fruit, the mission may drop off from the home plant that originally gave it life. Of course, if there is real maturity, this may be a natural and right result, nevertheless, missionary legislation

and administration should be scrutinized with greater severity than sometimes it has received.

On the other hand, changes of view have been taking place in the home church. The Methodist Episcopal Church, centered in the United States of America, and regarding itself as an American church, has taken a great missionary interest in the unChristianized world beyond its borders. It has introduced the Christian religion into many parts of the world. It has offered its prayers by the million and sent its millions of money year after year, and supported its selected missionaries, besides raising up a native ministry and maintaining many schools and other beneficent institutions, and this it is willing to go on doing, but it expects these foreign missions to strengthen and care for themselves, so that the church may be free to move on, and to throw its strength and resources into other fields.

With all its wonderful liberality, The Methodist Episcopal Church does not want to have its own strength sapped and its resources exhausted, so that it shall lose vigor and vitality at its center, and not be able to maintain its position and do its best work in the homeland. It is, therefore, not surprising that economists study the financial balance, and that men of broad views get a little anxious about the conditions and work in the United States of America, and wonder whether the proper balance is being preserved.

For example, questions are raised by some, on account of what they term the great expense of

bringing foreign delegates from the foreign mission fields to the General Conference, and entertaining them during their stay in connection with it in the United States, at least for about a month. They say this is a heavy and unnecessary item and a considerable tax upon the church, especially when it is remembered that proportionately their numbers are as great as the delegates from the American Conferences. People in the home church say "Why should we pay so much to bring people from distant and foreign lands to our General Conference to vote and to some extent, control us, when we know what we want, while their training is so different from that received in the United States, and when sometimes they have little knowledge of the English tongue, which is the official language of the church in its General Conference discussions, reports, votes, and records?" Some even go so far as to think that it ought not be necessary to bring all these good people from their work which is persistently demanding their attention in the distant foreign fields, while the visit to the General Conference in the United States means a loss of possibly a fourth of a year from their needed and valuable service.

Some even question the need of their coming at all, when the church in the United States of America is giving them such liberal support, and there are those in the United States ready to represent the foreign mission work.

Then these questioners ask why a foreign mis-

sion field should be represented by their own delegates, and they point to a time when no delegate came from a foreign mission and one was not expected to come from a foreign mission to the General Conference in America.

It is an historic fact that at one time the church had missions in foreign countries but from them no delegates came to the General Conferences. In that period The Methodist Episcopal Church founded and sustained missions abroad, sending missionaries and contributing money to spread Christianity in foreign lands, but no delegates from these missions sat in the General Conferences. Now there are delegates on an equality with the delegates from the home church, and with votes that may match the votes from the United States vote for vote and may even have the chance, with any other equal number, to hold the balance of power. At some time there must have been an interesting change. The General Conference of 1868 saw the first representative from a foreign mission seated in a General Conference of The Methodist Episcopal Church, and that, with other special events, made it a memorable Conference.

This seating of a representative from a foreign mission Conference was preceded, and, doubtless, influenced by another action of this General Conference, which opened the way for, and created the parliamentary flood which swept in this foreign missionary who had not been duly elected a delegate to the General Conference.

The history of the event is exceedingly interesting and highly illuminating. The previous General Conference, in 1864, was held during, and toward the closing period of the Civil War, which had a relation to the question of human slavery. Because of this old subject of controversy, The Methodist Episcopal Church, for some years, had not been operating in the farther South, though it never was out of the South, or out of slave territory. Now, however, the armies of the national government had opened up considerable sections of the more distant South, and it was proposed to embrace the opportunity for the resumption of church operations.

In 1845 certain Southern Conferences had withdrawn from The Methodist Episcopal Church, and organized a new body which they called The Methodist Episcopal Church, South. That made a period of only nineteen years and many leaders on both sides still lived, and also others who had belonged to the original church.

The bishops of The Methodist Episcopal Church considered that the time had come when this church should restore to the distant South its ministrations, and one reason was the needy condition of the section which had suffered so greatly from marching armies and the exhausting effects of years of devastating warfare. So the bishops of the church in their episcopal address said to the General Conference of 1864: "And now, the way being open for the return of The Methodist Episcopal Church, it is but natural that she should

reenter those fields and once more realize her unchanged title as 'The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America.' "[1]

This use of the legal title of the denomination was an assertion that it was not a limited, sectional body, but that it belonged to the whole United States of America, and that it owed service to, and in every part of this country. So the church went into these Southern sections, from which it had been debarred by slavery and slave conditions, but from which slavery had been banished. Then the church sent preachers, gathered people who came to them voluntarily, and formed Conferences of preachers.

These Conferences were not full Annual Conferences, but formative bodies, and the general advance was a home missionary movement, and, in the meantime, the Conferences could not be complete without further time, and until a subsequent General Conference had given them a matured Annual Conference status. At best they were only Mission Conferences, and, therefore, could not have their own delegates in the next General Conference, namely, that of 1868.

The preachers in that part of the South appear to have recognized these facts and hence did not elect delegates to that General Conference, though they did select, and send, persons whom they called "representatives," who might, and could, go to the seat of the General Conference.

When this General Conference, of 1868, con-

[1]General Conference *Journal*, 1864, pp. 278, 279.

vened, these persons were not listed as delegates to the body, but they were classed in the *Journal* as "representatives," as their Conferences had named them. These Southern Conferences that had selected these "representatives," were as follows: Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Holston, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and North Carolina, and Washington.

The law did not recognize any such officials as "representatives," but, nevertheless, on the very first day of the session, namely, May 1, 1868, an issue was joined, when "R. S. Foster presented the certificate of the election of John P. Newman as a representative from the Mississippi Mission Conference, and then moved that the whole subject of representation of Mission Conferences to this body be referred to a Special Committee of seven members."[1]

That R. S. Foster presented the case of his friend John P. Newman is no proof that he favored the admission of these "representatives" from these Mission Conferences. That his motion declared them to be Mission, and not Annual Conferences, on the contrary, shows that he knew that Mission Conferences could not elect delegates, and that no one could be legally admitted who was not a regular delegate. Still further we know that he voted against their admission.[2]

"The President announced the following committee on the matter of admitting the Representa-

[1] General Conference *Journal*, 1868, p. 23.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 130.

tives from the Mission Conferences to wit: R. S. Foster, J. M. Reid, E. O. Haven, Dr. Curry, J. Lanahan, J. G. Bruce, and L. Hitchcock.'"[1]

This committee reported on the sixth of May. The report was rather conservative, and, evidently, was intended to be a very guarded expression. It believed that "the disabilities should be removed" from these Southern Conferences, and recommended "that they be invested with the full rights of Annual Conferences; *provided,* That this action shall not be construed so as to affect or determine anything with respect to the question of their previous status." They recommended also "that the representatives" "be invited to seats at once on the floor of this Conference, and to participate in all its deliberations, to speak on all questions, offer resolutions, and do all other things, and have all other rights which any member of this body may have and do, *except vote.*"[2]

This shows that the committee knew that the so-called "representatives" were not "delegates," that the Conferences did not elect, and had no legal right to elect "delegates," and that the persons in question could not legally take part in the decisions of the body. That is what "*except vote*" meant. Other propositions were offered from the floor as substitutes, but, with the committee's report, were laid on the table.[3]

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[1] General Conference *Journal*, 1868, p. 25.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 94.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 127.

"W. L. Harris then offered a series of resolutions on the same subject,"[1] and his resolutions were adopted after several attempts to amend them. The resolutions contained the words "Provisional Delegates," and "G. B. Jocelyn moved to amend by striking out the word 'provisional,'" but the motion was laid on the table.

The adoption of these resolutions, first, repealed the restrictions placed upon these Southern Conferences by the General Conference of 1864; second, declared them "to be Annual Conferences of The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, and vested with all the rights, privileges and immunities usual to Annual Conferences of said Church"; and, third, "that the Provisional Delegates to this body, elected by the aforesaid Conferences severally, are hereby admitted to membership in this General Conference on the presentation of the requisite credentials."[2] The vote was: Ayes, 197; Noes, 15; Absent, 19.[3] Among the Noes, voting on this matter, we note the names of Doctor Daniel Curry, of the New York East Conference; William H. Ferris, of the New York Conference; Doctor Randolph S. Foster, of the New York Conference; Doctor John Lanahan, of the Baltimore Conference; Doctor James Porter, of the New England Conference; Doctor David Sherman, of the New England Conference; Doctor Henry Slicer, of the East Balti-

[1] General Conference *Journal*, 1868, p. 127.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 130.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 130.

more Conference, and other well-known names from other Conferences.[1]

They were a small minority against the enthusiasm that swept the General Conference, but they were mighty men whose opinion was worthy of profound respect.

Some things in these resolutions should command careful scrutiny. One thing is novel and questionable. Doctor Harris introduced into his resolutions a new title, which had not appeared in the transactions, and which was utterly unknown to the law of the church. He says in the third resolution: "That the Provisional Delegates to this body, elected by the aforesaid Conference severally, are hereby admitted," whereas the fact is that the said Conferences elected no "Provisional Delegates," or any other kind of delegates. They elected what they called "representatives," and the title "Provisional Delegates" was not used; and, further, the title "Provisional Delegates" was not legal, actual, or even practically correct. The title was invented—a rhetorical invention—and was used as an equivalent of the other title "representatives," which had no standing in the law, and was unknown to the nomenclature of the church. Nevertheless, it seems to have had influence in gaining votes for the resolutions, and in later years it came up again to make easy other irregularities.

The "representatives" were not "Provisional

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[1]General Conference *Journal*, 1868, p. 130.

Delegates" in law or fact, and they were not delegates at all of any sort known to the law, and, hence, they could not be admitted, for only legal delegates could be legally admitted to membership in the General Conference.

The Conferences in question had no authority to elect delegates; and if they had attempted to elect delegates without adequate authority, the action would have been null and void. So the General Conference, limited by the Constitution, had no authority to admit as members of its body those who had not been legally elected, for it had no right to legalize an election that was illegal, and calling bodies Annual Conferences could not make legal elections held by the bodies when they were not Annual Conferences, and the transformed Conferences, after they were called Annual Conferences, did not attempt to rectify the illegality by reelecting the parties as delegates, and they could not have done so, for they were not in session and the time for electing had passed.

The General Conference by its declaration could not transform previously elected "representatives" into legal delegates. There was no legal ground for its action and what the General Conference did was unconstitutional.

The members of the General Conference of 1868 apparently were affected by a reaction of the recent Civil War, and, swayed by sympathy and the spirit of patriotism, an emotional impulse blinded them to the law and logic of the case, and rushed them into doing what they thought was a practical

and generous thing, but, all the same, it was a violation of the law and the Constitution.

This irregular and unconstitutional action naturally led to other irregular consequences. Reacting from the strain of the war, and thrilled by the sight of new opportunities, they made one mistake, and having made one it was easier to make another. Having illegally admitted the "representatives" from the new Mission Conferences, it was easy to disregard the law still further. As they may have said: "If we have admitted representatives from these Mission Conferences, how can we refuse to admit them from other Mission Conferences?"

At the seat of the General Conference there was a returned missionary from the mission field in India. No delegate from a foreign mission field had ever been admitted to a General Conference. Indeed, it was an accepted fact that no one could come and be admitted. But this General Conference had admitted persons from American Mission Conferences, then why not admit a man from a foreign Mission Conference? Anyhow he was only one. The matter, however, involved historic facts and legal principles.

The question involved the status of a Conference in a foreign mission field. We turn to the proceedings of the General Conference of 1864, held only four years previously, and find that that Conference adopted the following:

"1. *Resolved,* That in the judgment of this General Conference, our Foreign Missions should be

organized into Mission Annual Conferences, so soon as their condition severally shall render such organization proper, and that such Mission Conference shall, with the concurrence of the presiding bishop, possess all the rights, powers, and privileges of other Annual Conferences, excepting that of sending delegates to the General Conference, and of drawing their annual dividends from the avails of the Book Concern and the Chartered Fund, and of voting on constitutional changes proposed in the *Discipline.*"[1]

That meant that, while the Conference in the Foreign Mission should meet annually, it was only a Mission Conference; that it had no claim upon the Book Concern dividend and the Chartered Fund; that it could not vote on amendments to the Constitution of the church; and that it could not send delegates to the General Conference.

The second resolution was: "That this General Conference organize the Missions in India into a Mission Annual Conference, with powers limited as above"; and the third was an authorization to the bishops "to organize any other of our Foreign Missions into Mission Conferences subject to the above limitations."[2]

That was the action of the General Conference of 1864, and by that action there was not one foreign field that had a Conference that was competent to elect a delegate to the General Conference of 1868. By the act of the General Confer-

[1] General Conference *Journal*, 1864, p. 138.
[2] *Ibid.*

ence of 1864 even a "Mission Annual Conference" in a foreign mission field was specifically prohibited from "sending delegates to the General Conference," and if anyone attempted to send a delegate to that body it would be a violation of that law and of the provisions of the Constitution of the church.

Notwithstanding all this a missionary who had been serving in India was found standing at the door of the General Conference of 1868. This was the Reverend John T. Gracey, a very worthy minister and a successful missionary, and quite fit to be a delegate, but India was only a Mission Conference and had no right to elect any one for membership in the General Conference.

On the eighteenth day of the session, the record shows that "J. F. Peck asked and obtained leave of temporary absence for the Committee on Itinerancy in order to consider the credentials of J. T. Gracey, claiming a seat in the body as a representative of the India Mission Conference."[1]

The case of the representatives from the new Southern Conferences was brought up on the very first day, and one may wonder why the case of the missionary from India was not presented until the eighteenth day. Perhaps the doubts as to legality had been stronger than in the cases of the Americans, but they had granted the plea in the first instance, and they might in the other.

On the afternoon of the twenty-fourth day, "On motion of R. S. Foster, J. T. Gracey, representa-

[1]General Conference *Journal*, 1868, pp. 223, 224.

tive of the India Mission Conference, was invited to a seat within the bar of the General Conference,'"[1] and, a little later that afternoon, "On motion of J. McClintock, J. T. Gracey was requested to speak on the subject before the Conference,"[2] which was the report of the Committee on Itinerancy on the matter of Foreign Mission Conferences.

This report recommended the transformation of foreign Conferences into Annual Conferences, and the final resolution was as follows: "Resolved, 4. That J. T. Gracey be and hereby is admitted to membership in this General Conference as Delegate from the India Annual Conference."[3]

The adoption of this report enacted all these provisions, and the Reverend John T. Gracey was admitted on the twenty-ninth day of May and sat until the adjournment of the Conference on the second day of June, so he was recognized as a member for a very few days, but the action was far-reaching.

The facts and arguments relating to the so-called "representatives" from the Southern Conferences in America apply in this instance, but with added force and additional reasons touching the foreign field. As in the cases of the Southern representatives, the action was irregular and illegal. The missionary from India was not elected as a delegate, and the Mission Conference to which

[1] General Conference *Journal*, 1868, p. 279.
[2] General Conference *Journal*, 1868.
[3] General Conference *Journal*, 1868, p. 282.

he belonged could not so elect him, and the General Conference had no authority to elect or make him a delegate.

It is possible that the intention of the Mission Conferences was to have in the "representative," such a representative, or agent, as a territory of the United States has at Washington, one who looks after the interests of the locality but has no vote in Congress.

From this single representative from the entire foreign field, entering the General Conference in this very unusual way, there has grown to be a large number of delegates from the foreign mission fields who have added to the increasing bulk, as well as the expense of the General Conference, and these things have led to many comments and questions.

Some who have an economical turn of mind declare that the General Conference has become too large, and the foreign missions present one way by which this huge body may be reduced; while others say: We help the people in these foreign misions by sending them our money and our missionaries, many of them among our best men, now when we send many missionaries and our money by the million, why should the laymen and ministers from the foreign missions come, especially in such numbers, into our General Conference, to govern us by perhaps holding the balance of power? They also call attention to what they assert will be the fact, namely, that these growing foreign misions will in the near future send an

increasing number of delegates and that will make their influence and power in the General Conference greater, and the home power relatively less, as the years go on.

So there are views at home as well as abroad, and if we know of ideas from the foreign missions the church might as well know what people are thinking and saying in the United States, even if it does not accept all they say.

The facts show conflicting fears and desires at home and abroad which militate against the notion of a world ecclesiasticism.

One may ask why any one in this enlightened and matter-of-fact age should want a church to have a world-government. Is it simply for the pleasure of controlling the world beyond our own natural and national, or racial environment? If so then this ambition to rule will react upon itself and the world beyond will come back on the central government and, with growing numbers, assert its claim to share in that world-rule and ultimately overwhelm the original asserting and governing center, and the record shows that less than a majority can bring this to pass.

History illustrates that over and over again. Many great nationalities brought on their own downfall through the ambition and effort to spread their government and power over the outlying peoples of the world. In turn these rising peoples swept over the mighty center, and swamped and destroyed its dominance. That was the result of Rome's world-government schemes,

and the barbarian and undeveloped peoples overwhelmed and crushed the well-nigh omnipotent Roman power.

World rule has always imperiled the actual or would-be world-ruler. Abandoning the fact or the attempt is a means of salvation, and the sooner the better.

One great colonial empire of modern times has attempted to avoid, and, so far, has avoided disaster, by planting and developing civilization here and there in the world, and then letting the colonies govern themselves almost to the parting point. In this Great Britain has shown her wisdom, for, by her concession of self-government, she has bound these distant and separate portions of the world by sympathetic and loving bonds more tenacious and eternal than could result from governing power backed by strong armies and omnipresent navies. She learned her lesson in time.

That method has its lessons for the ecclesiastical world as well as for secular systems.

It is not safe for the church to imitate the example, and to copy the careers of the old imperial governments. The Roman church copied imperial Rome, and though there was a growth of governmental power, there was also repeated disaster, and the weakening and loss of the best and vital things for which the Church of Christ stood.

We do not want others to govern us and we should not wish to govern others. If it be said

that our government would be a benefit to other peoples, other people might retort that if we were under their authority it would be better for us. As to the question of benefit we can easily find ways of being beneficial to others without our ruling them or having them in any degree rule over us.

There cannot be a world church with a good and wholesome world government.

In the first place a world church with a world government would embrace people of different nationalities and different races, and, therefore, it must have a mixed government with diverse and more or less antagonistic elements, and the wider it spreads and the more embracing it becomes, the less homogeneous it is likely to be. That means such a world government would contain the seeds of its own dissolution, perhaps after violent eruptions, unless there was a system of progressive suppression that was calculated to prevent a free and legitimate expression of sentiment on the part of the ministers and members who are governed. Even then the repression might lose its effectiveness, for, though it might seem efficient up to a certain point, yet, beyond that, the natural result would be an explosion.

This repression may take on a variety of forms, one of which, probably, would be the limitation of representation on the part of the dependencies who are governed, and the deprivation of any right to share in the exercise of government.

In the very nature of things an ecumenical

church calls for a reduced and reducing proportionate representation at the point where the seat of government is located. For this there may be physical and economical, as well as imperial reasons, for, with a world-wide ecclesiastical government, it is found that the world is too large geographically, and too limited financially, as well as in time, to sustain a fairly generous, and equally proportionate representation from distant parts, and, therefore, as the extent of the church continues to grow, that restrictive process must increasingly restrict representation or the government must collapse or break into fragments of its own weight. It is further to be remembered that this reduction of proportionate representation would affect those near the center as well as those at a distance.

World governments have always deemed it necessary not to have an equally representative recognition for all the regions of the earth, but, while they governed far and wide, to have a strongly centralized government at the center. So it does not tend to an equalized or equitable democracy.

Indeed a world government cannot be a truly democratic and equitably representative government, and this is true whether it is a secular or an ecclesiastical world power. In either case it tends to a limited and reduced representation, and as the concentration and condensation goes on, it tends to a despotism, in an ecclesiasticism, as well as in a civil government, and its full fruition is a

centralization symbolized by a czardom or a papacy, and this would be the case to-day, though, perhaps, slightly modified by peculiar circumstances.

A world secular government would be a menace to the world, and a world church would for the same reason be a danger to the world, and to itself, including those it governs. Both are undemocratic and suppressive of local liberty.

These principles apply to a modern as well as a medieval ecclesiasticism, and would apply to The Methodist Episcopal Church in proportion to any attempt to become a world church with a world government.

If The Methodist Episcopal Church was to attempt to be a world church, and, as such, develop a world government, and rule the foreign missions in the distant parts of the earth, there would inevitably be a reaction in the church itself that would modify its own character and cause an ecclesiastical and spiritual deterioration.

On the other hand, if the home church tried to be a world church and at the same time tried to preserve the democratic idea by giving to the foreign mission fields representation equal to what it has in the home field, its very liberality would bring an internal modification, for the growing power of the representation of its miscellaneous peoples from abroad, though they might not intend it, would sooner or later change the home church very materially and make it less American and less like the original church.

A little thought will show that under such conditions, with voting power in the hands of delegates, differently educated, and different in so many ways, The Methodist Episcopal Church could not continue to be the American Church it has been.

However these things may be, there is no divine call for The Methodist Episcopal Church to rule the religious world, and there is no divine command that The Methodist Episcopal Church should be ruled in whole or part by foreign missions which it has planted and to which it has given its money and its men with the most lavish liberality. Helping missions abroad is one thing, out a world government by all under all is a very different thing, and being governed by the world is still different.

In foreign countries, as has been seen, there are many assertions of race consciousness, and positive uprisings from national instinct and ambition, and corresponding conditions are found in the ecclesiasticisms of foreign mission fields. This is not limited to one form of church work, and the Methodist Episcopal foreign missions are not exempt. Administrators have seen it and at times have been greatly concerned to judiciously find a way to prevent the logical outcome.

There have been commotions in foreign mission fields, sometimes sporadic and limited to a few, and sometimes more general, but not universal. Now and then these uprisings have subsided, but in instances they have resulted in local and not

inconsiderable defections. Nevertheless small as some are, they are symptomatic and indicate a spirit of unrest more or less deeply seated in racial and national instincts, and the desire for self-government. Even at the present time there are movements toward affiliation, or combination, between mission bodies, and individuals advocate a fusion into a sort of national Christianity.

Perhaps it may be said that these manifestations have been contributed to and encouraged by some of our missionary workers and others, who have carried the idea of cooperation with other denominational workers to such an extreme as to impress the natives with the idea that it is not so necessary to be a Methodist Episcopalian as they once thought, and that they could do just as well if they merged with a body carrying the name of one of the other denominations, or to create a new title, a new polity, and a new creed.

Indeed it is possible that some of the union and other federated movements, under some excellent men in connection with foreign mission work, have helped to fade out the distinctness of The Methodist Episcopal Church, in its distinctiveness, in the minds of many native Christians, so as to make it easy to discard Methodist Episcopalianism and substitute something else, and still call themselves Christians. This it may be possible for them to do, but it is not the duty of Methodist Episcopal missionaries and workers to weaken the hold of the Methodist Episcopal type of Christianity, but it is their duty to avoid

methods that even unintentionally produce such an effect.

Some go so far as to suggest that the financial and other support received from the church in the United States is what holds the foreign mission to the American Church, and it is said that one administrator said to certain agitators for ecclesiastical independence in a certain country: "Well, you cannot go off from the mother church and retain your claim on the financial support from the home church."

Doubtless the money bond has strength and helps to hold the younger generation in the foreign land to the mother church, and it should be expected to have an influence in this direction, but it is not the only bond, and, if the money were cut off, there would be bonds of affection that would link the mother and her offspring. Yet the spirit that makes for independence might prove strong enough to result in some form of separation, and the things we have pointed out show the possibilities and probabilities.

The child with an immeasurable love for the parent nevertheless leaves the parent's home and starts a new household, and humanity is better for it. The colony established by the mother country aspires for self-government and becomes a new nation, and the world is the better for that. So the mission planted by the mother church in a distant country may manage its own affairs, and by its independence become a new center for the conversion of the world.

Various reasons exist for considering the subject at the present moment. Various forces are at work and those in close touch have felt the power of the forces now coming into action.

Since writing the above we have come across an article written by the Reverend George A. Miller, who has had considerable experience in a mission field. His article shows that he recognizes the very conditions we have mentioned, and in it he says:

"Suppose that we of the United States were asked to submit to foreign control in the administration of our church affairs? How long would we endure it? Is not just this charge of un-Americanism the great outcry against the ecclesiastical monopoly with headquarters on the banks of the Tiber? And our own dominance of the church in mission lands is more intimate and evident than that of the Pope over the American Catholic Church. We send foreigners to control every mission field; we consult with the natives, but the decision is ours. We handle the money and pay the men and decide the issues and make the appointments, and once in four years we get together in General Conference assembled and decide what is good for the rest of the world. To be sure, there are delegates present from all lands, but they are deaf and dumb delegates for the most part, caught in a vast legislative machine that finds them often powerless to speak or act."[1]

Doubtless the writer of the paragraph just

[1] *Pacific Christian Advocate*, August 9, 1922.

quoted has breathed the mission atmosphere, and heard echoes from within, as well as felt the spirit of unrest, and because of that we give the quotation. Some things, however, which he says perhaps need a little qualification.

It is true the home church exercises some authority. It could not be otherwise. It furnishes the money and has a right to see that it is properly expended. So it sends and supports the missionaries and must hold them to their task and must protect them while they perform it. So for a time the parent provides for and governs the child, but there comes a time when the child wants to support himself and wants freedom to make his own way in the world. Something of the same kind may be expected in the case of the developing foreign mission, and when it has matured so that it handles its own affairs, they will not need to go as "delegates" and be "caught in a vast legislative machine that finds them often powerless to speak or act."

The Reverend Mr. Miller says:

"We face a very different test to-day. Missionary administration was a simple art when all the converts were humble learners and the missionary came as an inspired and superior teacher to point out the better way. There were difficulties, even as there are problems in the household of small children, but they were not the problems of to-day. The mission children are growing up, and like all families, they are growing faster than their parents realize. When did adolescence ever

appear without a shock of surprise to the elders? How rapidly the demands and activities of these sturdy youthful churches and national leaders are becoming, only those in close association with the spirit of mission churches can understand."

Then he observes:

"Before we become impatient and begin to accuse these healthy offspring of the American Church, of ingratitude and immaturity of judgment, it is well to stop, and think a moment. The gospel is native to every land and clime. As soon as it takes root, the inhabitants of Tientsien or Timbuctoo feel that this gospel in a peculiar way belongs racially and intrinsically to themselves and that being their own, they have a right to use its privileges and propagate its promises to their fellowmen. The gospel always does just that. It makes patriots, ecclesiastical patriots, and it creates independence of spirit and action even within the mission church itself. No man can become a convert to a free gospel and an open Bible and a vital experience and not also develop a strong spirit of independence in his desire to extend these blessings to the rest of his countrymen.

"Now this is the most normal and hopeful result of our missionary work. It is time to thank God and take courage. These restless young churches are going to become stalwart ecclesiastical giants. That they are not always wise and prudent is but natural, even though it be decidedly perplexing and at times distressing. No way has yet been devised to pass from childhood to man-

hood without going through this heady, flighty, energetic period.'"[1]

These natural and national forces tend to assert themselves more and more as racial and patriotic impulses have increased freedom of action, for Christianity does not destroy racial segregation and love of country. These are things inherent in human nature and are not destroyed, but more probably are intensified by religion.

With these influences fixed in human nature they are sure sooner or later to manifest themselves in the Christian mission in a foreign country, so that when there is a large Christian population in such a land, it is sure to demand and develop a Christian Church of the nation, and the organization with the racial and national impulses will tend toward an independent church within national lines.

It would seem therefore that the mother church should look forward to the possibility, probability, and even certainty, that ultimately the foreign mission will want a church not foreign to its own land but indigenous and self-governing. It is decreed by race and patriotic feeling.

There is another fact, perhaps more remote, but no less real, which arises from international relations, and the fact that the foreign mission is under another political government. If the converts belong to a church of a foreign land then

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[1]Reverend G. A. Miller, *Pacific Christian Advocate*, August 9, 1922.

they may be the innocent sufferers from political complications between their own government and the government where their church is located.

We have no assurance, for example, that there will not be more wars, and many of them. The United States as a nation may be involved in war through misunderstandings, rivalries, and antagonisms of other nations, it may be with a government where the American Church has a foreign mission. In such a case the members connected with the mission of the American Church would be under suspicion and subject to persecution. Under such circumstances they would be in a better position if they had their own church within their nation. This is plainly a strong reason for letting a foreign mission have its own government. How much this had to do with the independence of the mission in Japan we will not attempt to say.

This does not mean that all these possibilities will materialize in an instant, or that they will come suddenly in an unexpected moment, or that there will be a violent convulsion, but the tendencies, which may not mature to-morrow, or, in some instances, for a long time, should be recognized, so that there may be no surprise and the possibilities should be looked forward to, and in the modification or development of our foreign mission polity, these possibilities and probabilities should be kept in mind, and, if the native or national bodies should seek independence and separate from the mother church, there may con-

tinue an affiliation and affection like unto that of mother and daughter.

Even if a foreign mission became a self-governing, or independent ecclesiastical body, that need not sever all relationship between it and the mother church.

The home church could continue to do very much for its offspring, and in various ways the new organization could still keep up its affiliation.

The mother church could still aid the mission with contributions of missionary money, reserving to itself the right to say on what conditions the missionary money shall be given, and the process by which it shall be sent to them, and when, where, to whom and for what, and how, it shall be disbursed, and, to preserve its Methodism, condition the support on conformity to the doctrinal teachings of The Methodist Episcopal Church, and so as to the ecclesiastical polity.

The home church in the home land would continue to have a deep interest in what she had planted, protected, and nourished in the foreign country, while, on the other hand, the former mission would remember with gratitude its great indebtedness to the mother church, and overflowing love would continue to flow from one to the other.

Surely from all points of view, it must seem better that in foreign lands, there should grow up independent local churches, each within the bounds of the race or nation, and that the foreign mission field should thus mature until it is able to administer its own affairs, rather than they

should go on forever with a diversity of taste, and with antagonistic political and racial views, which make not for peace in the central government or their native land.

It is reasonable to say that it will be wise ecclesiastical statesmanship to expect that outcome, and to judiciously prepare for it, by teaching and training the ministers and members of to-day to develop themselves, and carry on the work, so that to-morrow, or whenever the time comes they will be a true Methodist Episcopal Church in their native environments and within their racial and national peculiarities.

The seed has been sown and harvests have been gathered, and a right evolution may be directed. To change the figure, the leaven has been working in the meal, and, in due time all will be leavened.

What was done in the cases of Canada and Japan may teach at least something, but now the Church, with greater experience, vaster resources, and, we may say, with greater skill, may gradually, and rapidly, do better work for the home church at the center, and at the same time, out in the world, meet the peculiar needs of different lands by making churches for the locality and the people thereof, and these self-governing bodies will look with gratitude to the central or mother church, and the mother church in the United States of America will still love and help all, as she is able, somewhat as she now helps Japan. Then there will be a great Methodist Episcopal galaxy blazing in the ecclesiastical firmament, each orb swing-

ing in its own orbit and all blessing the whole earth.

That independence may be the destiny of the foreign mission does not mean that all the missions in foreign lands will be set off, or withdraw at the same moment. The ripening moment is not likely to come to all at the same time, and the church might still have some to care for after others had attained self-government.

So as some became independent it would be possible for the church to establish another foreign mission somewhere else, and this losing and gaining of missions might continue many years, for all the heathen and Mohammedan world is not likely to be Christianized for a very long time.

It, therefore, follows that granting independence to foreign missions, or their assuming it, does not carry with it the abandonment of the Foreign Missionary Society, or the loss of the missionary's vocation. That is not conceivable for very many generations or ever. As long as the world is not entirely converted there will be work for the missionary and the body that sends and supports him.

In the future, however, it should be clearly understood that the starting and supporting of a mission in a foreign land does not mean an attempt to make a world-wide ecclesiasticism or a world church, but to spread Christianity as defined by The Methodist Episcopal Church. The aim, therefore, is not to build up so many integral parts of The Methodist Episcopal Church in the

United States of America, but to plant Christianity and organize a church which will be a Christian Church in its own country.

In the case of the mission field becoming an organized church according to the system of The Methodist Episcopal Church, logically the Missionary Bishop would remain with his field, but, if by mistake or accident, or in any other way, a General Superintendent Bishop chanced to be in a foreign land, he, being a Bishop for the United States, would fall back on the church in America, which must provide for him. This shows the continuing value of the Missionary Bishop in the foreign field.

CHAPTER X

IN THE MEANTIME

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In the meantime it may be found judicious, in view of these tendencies and probabilities, and the proper development of the work in the foreign fields to modify the mechanism in the foreign field so as to increase its self-government, so that its polity will be fairly complete in itself.

In course of years, as the work has spread, the Conferences increased, and the higher administrators have become more numerous, in the larger fields, there has been a demand for a central body in the foreign mission field with increased, and increasing powers, and in the law there has been granted a Central Conference, which is a good deal more than the Annual Conference.

The first law in regard to a "Central Mission Conference" appears in the book of *Discipline* for 1892, in a chapter under that heading.

In the opening paragraph it is stated that "When in any of our Foreign Mission Fields there is more than one Annual Conference or Mission, it shall be lawful, by order of the General Conference, to organize a Central Conference, to be composed either of all the members of those Annual Conferences or Missions, or of representatives from the same, elected according to such ratio as may be agreed upon between the constitu-

ent parties, who may also provide for the admission of Laymen to such Conference, the number of Lay Delegates not to exceed that of the Clerical Delegates.'"[1]

It was provided that it could do certain things but never in contravention of the book of Discipline, or Rules of the General Conference,"[2] but the specifications were few and simple. The outline simplicity may be considered as continuing until the General Conference of 1920, when a number of new provisions of a radical character were introduced.

In 1908 "The Central Conference of Southern Asia is authorized to fix the residences of the Missionary Bishops for Southern Asia," was inserted and in 1916, this was made to read: "The Central Conference of Southern Asia, and between sessions the executive Board of the Central Conference is authorized to fix the residences of the Missionary Bishops for Southern Asia, and to assign the Missionary Bishops to such residences," and this remained in 1920, and is the present reading. All of which shows how the power of the Central Mission Conference was growing.

The most striking changes, however, were made by the General Conference of 1920, and appear in the present book of *Discipline*.[3]

In the present law are added provisions which mean new powers given to the Central Mission

[1] *Discipline*, 1892, ¶86, p. 59.
[2] *Discipline*, 1892, ¶86, §3.
[3] *Discipline*, 1920, ¶95, pp. 88-91.

Conference. Thus: "(3) In cooperation and collaboration with the Board of Foreign Missions and the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, it shall supervise the missionary work and policy of the indigenous Church and provide suitable organization for such work."

Here it is interesting to note that there is a new descriptive word "indigenous," making a distinction between "the indigenous Church" in the foreign mission and some other church presumably the home church in the United States.

In addition, there are new provisions for making courses of study, for modifications of the Ritual, for establishing marriage rites and ceremonies, and for qualifying an Article of Religion, all of which start many questions.

The law declares that any foreign mission field, having more than one Annual Conference or mission, may organize a Central Conference, if ordered by the General Conference. It will be seen that this gives the Central Mission Conference very considerable power so that it may consider and direct many local affairs, and it will also be seen that, with a touch or two, this body could be made a regional General Conference, and, with its bishops now at hand, the field could be, if desired, a self-governing church; and, if it withdrew, or was set off, from The Methodist Episcopal Church, it could at once go on functioning as a local Methodist Episcopal Church within its own race or nation. Perhaps that is the ultimate intention.

At the present time the *Discipline* provides six Central Conferences, as follows:

1. European Central Conference.
2. Eastern Asia Central Conference.
3. Southern Asia Central Conference.
4. The Central Conference for Southeastern Asia.
5. South Africa Central Conference.
6. Central Conference for Latin America.[1]

That we may have a more comprehensive view of the component parts of these Central Mission Conferences, we give the list of the Conferences and Missions under each Central Conference, as follows:

European Central Conference:

1. Austria Mission Conference.
2. Bulgaria Mission Conference.
3. Denmark Annual Conference.
4. Finland Annual Conference.
5. France Mission Conference.
6. Italy Annual Conference.
7. North Germany Annual Conference.
8. Norway Annual Conference.
9. Russia Mission.
10. South Germany Annual Conference.
11. Sweden Annual Conference.
12. Switzerland Annual Conference.
13. North Africa Mission Conference.
14. Hungary Mission.
15. Baltic Mission.
16. Jugo-Slavic Mission Conference.

[1] *Discipline*, 1920, ¶523, pp. 402-404.

17. Spain Mission.

Eastern Asia Central Conference:

1. Central China Annual Conference.
2. Japan Mission Council.
3. Foochow Annual Conference.
4. Hinghua Annual Conference.
5. Kiangsi Annual Conference.
6. Korea Annual Conference.
7. North China Annual Conference.
8. West China Annual Conference.
9. Yenping Annual Conference.

Southern Asia Central Conference:

1. Bengal Annual Conference.
2. Bombay Annual Conference.
3. Burma Mission Conference.
4. Central Provinces Annual Conference.
5. North India Annual Conference.
6. Northwest India Annual Conference.
7. South India Annual Conference.

The Central Conference for Southeastern Asia:

1. Malaysia Annual Conference.
2. Philippine Islands Annual Conference.
3. The Netherlands India Mission Conference.

And any other Annual Conference, Mission Conference, or Mission which may be organized.

South Africa Central Conference:

1. Angola Mission Conference.
2. Congo Mission Conference.
3. Rhodesia Mission Conference.
4. Southeast Africa Mission Conference.

Central Conference for Latin America:

1. Mexico Annual Conference.

2. Panama Mission.
3. North Andes Mission Conference.
4. Bolivia Mission.
5. Chile Annual Conference.
6. Eastern South America Annual Conference.

And any other Annual Conference, Mission Conference, or Mission that may be organized in Latin-America.[1]

Thus the foreign mission fields of The Methodist Episcopal Church are divided into geographical sections under the title of "Central Mission Conferences," and a glance at them shows the certainty of further subdivision; for example, Europe will need a number of subdivisions, and Latin-America will need a readjustment. Practically, however, these divisions into Central Conferences cover all the work of The Methodist Episcopal Church outside the United States of America, and these divisions mark a distinction between the home church in the United States and the missions in the foreign world. They also suggest how the sections of the foreign work may gain self-government and ecclesiastical independence and then carry on the same work.

The chapter in the book of Discipline on the Central Mission Conference is exceedingly suggestive and a fine sample of modern ecclesiastical evolution. It suggests the tall oak rising from the tiny acorn, and one's imagination may perceive many pleasing possibilities in the development of missions in heathen lands into independ-

[1] *Discipline*, 1920, ¶523, pp. 402-404.

ent church centers of new Christian empires, but it is entirely another thing now found in the printed chapter on the Central Conference.

The main idea in a document may be all right and the details may all be wrong, and sometimes though one approve the chief purpose he must dissent from some particulars. It is even so as to the amendments and insertions made in this chapter in or by or by and in the General Conference of 1920.

The law as to the Central Mission Conference is like a constitution for that body. It declares how the Central Mission Conference is to be constituted and who shall preside over it, and also prescribes its powers, but, as it was made only by the General Conference, which is subordinate to the Constitution of The Methodist Episcopal Church, the law of the said Central Conference does not have the authority of the Constitution of the said Church. It is subordinate to that organic law, and, if in any particular, it should appear that it violates the Church Constitution, it would, in that particular, be null and void, just as would any unconstitutional act of the General Conference.

Some things in the provisions for the Central Mission Conferences may require careful reconstruction so that there may be no mistaking the meaning and that there may be no conflict with the fundamental principles of the system to be maintained by the whole church.

The provision that "A Central Conference shall

have power to make such adaptations regarding membership, special advices, worship, and the local Ministry, not contrary to the Discipline, as the peculiar conditions of the fields concerned call for."[1]

This is very delicate and far-reaching. Who is to decide whether the foreign acts are in harmony with the general Church law? Who is to report any departure? This might be more exactly expressed, for there might be serious deviations that some might not think were departures from the law and yet might be variations from the true spirit of the church and tend to destroy its unity.

The simple fact is that the provision and permission thus intended to be granted to the Central Conference "to make such adaptations regarding membership, special advices, worship, and the local Ministry, not contrary to the Discipline, as the peculiar conditions of the fields concerned call for," is giving these distant bodies authority to do these things, and making them the judges as to need, propriety, and legal right, and this vital matter is one thing the General Conference has no right to do.

The General Conference is empowered to make "rules and regulations for the Church" under certain "limitations and restrictions,"[2] but it has no right to empower anybody else to make "rules and regulations for the church," and that, practically without "limitations and restrictions" with-

[1] *Discipline* 1920, ¶95, §4, (5).
[2] *Discipline*, 1920, p. 44; Constitution. Art. x, ¶46.

out value or force. Such a permission is most dangerous, and is null and void. With such latitude as this the unity of the church would be utterly destroyed.

Think of allowing a Central Mission Conference to make any rules and regulations in the matter of "worship" it desires at any time, with power to change at its pleasure! Think of allowing a Central Conference to make any rules and regulations it pleased in regard to "the local Ministry," or any other rank in the ministry of the church! Then think of six Central Mission Conferences doing this, each with its own variations, and that after awhile there may be sixty such Central Conferences! What uniformity would the churches have? How many errors would creep in and become crystallized?

In addition notice the risk taken in the matter of church membership. What is more vital to a church organization than the terms of membership? Yet here it is left to the Central Conference in a foreign mission field, and so to the six Central Conferences, and to the sixty that may be. Then it will be possible to have in the foreign missions as many different and contradictory conditions as there are Central Mission Conferences. Perhaps the loose ideas of natives who have been educated amid heathenism may have some influence in modifying the terms. We are not asserting certainties but possibilities, as each Central Conference, for the center of the church, is the sole judge. At least it looks like letting

down the bars, and running dangerous risks. Then once the parties are admitted to membership under these new and possibly faulty terms they are possible members, by transfer anywhere. You might as well let every individual pastor in the church admit persons into his church according to his notion, or his judgment, which may be bad.

Some things are vital to Methodism and cannot be sacrificed but must be protected by the entire church, and one of these things is the condition of membership. In that is found soundness of doctrine, loyalty to the church government, and the religious life of the individual. One may say we can trust the parties who will be charged with the responsibility. That is a contingency no one knows, but the General Conference has no right to take the risk. The conditions must be uniform and must be determined by constitutional principles.

Again we read: "A Central Conference shall have the power to establish detailed rules, rites, and ceremonials for the solemnization of marriage not contrary to the statute law of the country or countries within its jurisdiction."[1]

This is extremely loose. There is no reference to harmony with the teachings of The Methodist Episcopal Church or general Christianity. One may say they are taken for granted, but nothing is taken for granted in the construction of laws. This allows the Central Conference to make a marriage

[1] *Discipline*, 1920, ¶95, §4, (7).

ceremony and "detailed rules and rites" of any sort, so that they are "not contrary to the statute law of the country or countries within its jurisdiction." If the countries were Mohammedan or heathen, the ceremonials and rules could conform to the teachings under these governments. If they allowed a plurality of wives the Central Conference could provide for bigamy or worse. It may be said that the Conference would not do that, but we are calling attention to a loosely drawn law. No one knows what might be done after awhile.

The provision[1] "A Central Conference is authorized to prepare and translate into the vernacular concerned simplified and adapted forms of such parts of the Ritual as may be deemed necessary; to extend Article xxiii of the Articles of Religion to recognize the government or the governments of countries within its jurisdiction," is more than questionable. The Articles of Religion, and the expressions in the Ritual belong to the doctrines of the whole church, and this liberty might result in each of the six Central Mission Conferences having different and contrary Ritualistic statements even as to the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Any one who knows the Constitution of The Methodist Episcopal Church knows that it prohibits the General Conference from changing any Article of Religion, and what the General Conference cannot do itself it cannot delegate to another. Yet here there is not an appeal, or even a reference, to the mother church.

[1] *Discipline*, 1920, ¶95, §4, (4).

When we remember how, in the General Conference of 1916, the Ritual of the church was changed the church may well be alarmed at this new risk of another and very different Ritual. Here we need not go into details, though it may be told that the proposed ritual passed through a Commission, then came to the General Conference and was by it referred to the bishops with power. When later it came to the General Conference it was adopted without debate and without being read. The General Conference voted on it without hearing it read or knowing what was in it.

Articles of Religion, Rituals, constitutional matters of polity, and similar things are of vital importance in church organization and ecclesiastical life. They contain the doctrines which are believed to be essential, the settled forms for religious services and the sacraments, and the fundamental agreements in the ecclesiastical organism. In brief, these things are the symbols of the church, and symbols that indicate the differences between churches. If they are not sacred, in the strictest sense, they come very close to it, and to treat them carelessly, and without, or in disregard of Constitutional protection is a form of sacrilege.

To give a section of a country or a part of an ecclesiastical organization, anywhere, and particularly, to a distant point, the right or supposed right to construct new and different symbols of this character which must mean variation from the original and existing central organization, must mean the making of a new and different church,

though the process may be called irregular. The new symbols with new doctrines, new religious forms, and a new polity, at least in part, means a body different from the mother church, practically set off, and, actually a new church.

To allow a section of the church to make such changes is not within the province of any subordinate body in the church, and great as it is, the General Conference is only a subordinate body—subordinate to the Constitution and the whole church in its entirety. The General Conference is not empowered to do such a thing, and, if the church could do it at all, it could not be done by a less power than the entire church. The General Conference could not start, or permit the actual starting of a different ecclesiasticism, or a practically new church, while still permitting it to continue to be, and function, as a part of the original Methodist Episcopal Church. If the section means at once to become independent, and does become independent, then, after that, the new body will be free to make new and varying symbols, but not while it remains as a part of The Methodist Episcopal Church. To give the section any right to do these things as a part of the present the General Conference has no authority, and, if the General Conference suggests, or attempts to authorize a section of the church to do such things, it goes beyond its province and its action is null and void.

One may wonder whether this is a sample of the loose legislation in the modern General Con-

ference, when in haste there is little comparison with existing legislation or ancient principles. If so, care is needed to keep in mind other principles and laws as well as the immediate proposition before the body. Such things make the impression on intelligent minds that some seem to be working for the church's dissolution, or that their recklessness tends in that direction.

Still another provision should be noted. It reads: "Subject to the approval of the Bishops, it shall have power to arrange Courses of Study, including these in the vernaculars, for its Ministry, both foreign and indigenous, including Local Preachers, exhorters, Bible Women, Deaconesses, teachers, both male and female, and all other workers whatsoever, ordained or lay."[1]

This is certainly quite comprehensive. It covers courses for ministers, not only in the vernacular tongues of the mission countries, but also the languages of "its Ministry, both foreign and indigenous," so that, under this phrasing, it would seem to have power to make even an English course. But the book of *Discipline* also provides for the whole church that "There shall be a Permanent Commission on Courses of Study,"[2] etc., and this Commission prepares courses in English and in other languages.[3] Does this mean a conflict of courses, and a conflict of authority?

On the face of these laws it seems plain that

[1] *Discipline*, 1920, ¶95, §4, (2).
[2] *Ibid.*, ¶210, §1.
[3] *Ibid.*, ¶¶623-665.

there may be a clash between the Central Mission Conferences and the Commission, and the Board of Bishops, and that the courses of the Central Conferences might conflict with the courses of study approved by the Board of Bishops.

Under the law of 1920 for the Central Mission Conferences, each Central Conference can make its own course of study, and there would be as many different courses as there are Central Conferences, now six, and in the future more, and these courses might conflict with each other both in textbooks and in theological teachings, and all of them might conflict with the courses of study prepared by the regular Commission and approved by the Board of Bishops.

Under these conditions it might happen that the courses in the foreign mission fields might in some or many particulars be un-Methodistic, and result in indoctrinating the preachers and ministers in the missions abroad with false doctrinal teachings, so that, while The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States was spending its money to spread Methodistic Christianity in foreign missions the courses of study would be undermining Methodism. Of course it may be retorted that there might be difficulties in connection with the other course at home. The point, however, is with the possible confusion in so many courses, and the great distance from the foreign fields, and no reflection is intended in reference to individuals.

The phrasing of the law, as it appears to give

the Central Mission Conferences "power to arrange Courses of Study, including those in the vernaculars, for its Ministry, both foreign and indigenous," may be held to cover all the languages spoken on the Mission fields, including even the English, which is used more or less in all the foreign fields.

Even outside the letter of the law, it must be conceded to be a fact that, unless for the moment we except English, all the languages covered by the Courses of Study or covered by the official announcement of study courses approved come under the Central Mission Conferences, so that if the Central Conferences covered their own languages for their own candidates, they would limit the Commission and the Board of Bishops, as related to the matter merely to the English tongue, and to the United States of America, for the Central Mission Conferences cover all the churches outside these United States.

Heretofore it has been the rule that the Board of Bishops fix the Courses of Study for the entire church, though they received suggestions from various quarters. Since 1916 they must approve the Constitution of the Courses and the texts prepared and presented by the "Commission on Courses of Study." This new arrangement of 1920 raises some new questions.

One may point out that the law says: "Subject to the approval of the Bishops, it [the Central Mission Conference] shall have the power to arrange the Courses of Study," etc. That is carry-

ing out the old principle of giving the bishops the final word as to the fixed studies of the candidates for the ministry and for orders.

The act of 1920 says "the approval of the Bishops" is required. What bishops are intended? Does it mean the bishops in the territory of the Central Mission? It does not say so. At the time this new law was made, the chapter on "Central Mission Conferences" recognized missionary bishops in the field and that there might be the presence of a general superintendent. Thus we read: "A General Superintendent or a Missionary Bishop, if present, shall preside over a Central Mission Conference; . . . Missionary Bishops have equal rights and privileges with General Superintendents in the sessions of the Central Mission Conferences with which they are connected."[1] Does it mean the missionary bishops? It does not say so. Does it mean the general superintendents who may chance to be in the mission field? It does not say so, and it does not say both of these classes.

Does "Subject to the approval of the Bishops" mean those who are outside of the United States and in the foreign mission fields? It does not say so, and cannot mean so, because the reference is in the singular, "a Central Mission Conference," and each Central Conference is to prepare its own "Courses of Study." If it meant any of these things, the presumption is that the law would have distinctly stated the

[1] *Discipline*, 1920, ¶95, §3.

exact fact. It does say "Subject to the approval of the Bishops." That is what the body of bishops was called for many generations. They were "The Bishops" and were more recently called "The Board of Bishops" and the law has recognized "The Board of Bishops" as the body to pass upon courses of Study.[1] Some of these propositions for the Central Mission Conferences, particularly the acts of 1920, should be corrected, for the reasons that have been presented, and then carefully studied changes may be introduced from time to time.

The Central Conference may prove itself to be the very organism that is needed, both in connection with the home church, and whenever a separate organization is desired. The apparent conflicts may be rectified and the Central Mission Conference can be put on a proper basis so as to preserve the good that now exists, and at the same time develop a wholesome self-government according to the tested principles of The Methodist Episcopal Church.

With a proper adjustment, giving the foreign mission much to say in regard to its own affairs, there would not be the same need to send foreign delegates to the General Conference in the United States of America, and possibly, not the same desire, or at least in the same proportion, and the representation might be reduced according to the degree of power granted to the foreign mission. It may be remembered that the United States

[1] *Discipline*, 1920, 210, §2, pp. 159, 160.

Congress has one representative from a territory. It may be presumed that the bishops of the foreign field would be at the General Conference anyhow.

The diminution of representation would save considerable expense, and quiet the apprehension that the foreign influence would have unnecessary power in the home church in the United States. At the same time the calling forth of the thought, the self-reliance, and the activities of the foreign mission would tend to give it a self-training that would make for a progressive and sane development in governmental matters, and result in a self-supporting church displaying the spirit of intelligent and Christian self-determination.

This is certainly simpler than the complicated and impracticable recommendations as to "the Regional Jurisdictions in foreign countries" in the "Report of the Commission on Unification" to the General Conference of 1920.[1]

Such an intricate scheme failed, as it ought to fail, for it was not a natural evolution and could not be a genuine union.

[1]General Conference *Journal*, 1920, pp. 1383-1402.

CHAPTER XI

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The General Conference of 1920 did three very remarkable things in regard to the foreign missions of The Methodist Episcopal Church. First it elected no missionary bishops, although it was generally conceded that the episcopacy in the foreign mission fields needed strengthening.

Second, it elected an unusually large number of general superintendent bishops, and sent a very large proportion of them to reside in foreign mission fields and to supervise the work in the foreign fields where their residences were fixed. The unparalleled number of elections to some form of episcopacy was a shock to very many in the church, and has furnished food for serious reflection in the time which has followed. It immensely increased the financial burdens of the Church but has not given any adequate increase in the fields covered by bishops, while the methods of election were so peculiar as to be widely regarded as unconstitutional. It is not a precedent to be followed.

Third, by election, transformed all the effective missionary bishops into general superintendents and left them in their foreign mission fields.

By electing and consecrating the missionary bishops as general superintendents, it became pos-

sible to take every one of them out of the foreign work for which they had had years of training, and for which they had acquired special knowledge and skill, and place them as regular or ordinary bishops in the United States of America, for which they had no such preparation or special aptitude. In this instance, however, this translation was not effected, and the missionary bishops who had been made general superintendents were left in the foreign field with which they were familiar, but the change to the general superintendency, it is understood, makes it possible for any General Conference to take them from the foreign work and assign them to the episcopal work in the United States, and practically discard their missionary knowledge, and many would regard this as economic waste. At the same time the transformation into general superintendent bishops added nothing to their fitness for the foreign mission work.

All the missionary bishops for India were selected from missionaries on the field and so had a preparation for their work in the Missionary episcopacy, but it was a very different thing to take a large number of ministers who had not had any such special preliminary training, but had been brought up in the United States, and place them in India to be bishops of a foreign people.

That such men might attain success may be freely admitted, but that would depend on individual characteristics. In a qualified sense they would have everything to learn, but the mission-

ary, and possibly the native, would have the advantage at first and for a long time.

The bishops, called general superintendents, who were selected in 1920, to go to, and reside in certain foreign missions, were practically sent to the foreign missions to do such work as the missionary bishops had done, or, to put it squarely, to do the work of missionary bishops, and which missionary bishops could continue to do, and it was pretty distinctly, and even emphatically, stated, in more ways than one, that they were expected to remain in the foreign fields to which they were assigned; but they are general superintendents, and not missionary bishops, and a new situation has at once developed.

The new situation is first, in sending such a large number of general superintendents to foreign mission fields; and, second, in the apparent effort to consider the sending of general superintendent bishops to reside in foreign fields as an established policy. In recent years a few general superintendents have been placed in foreign lands but that might have been regarded as exceptional and because of an emergency, but the action of the General Conference of 1920 shows an intention somewhere to boldly inaugurate a policy which would blot out all distinction between the home church and foreign missions, and regard general superintendent bishops as for both and interchangeable. That is what is meant in placing nearly as many general superintendents abroad as at home. The time has come, therefore, that the

church should awake to the fact that to place many general superintendents, or only one general superintendent bishop in the foreign field is an unconstitutional act, as the Constitution plainly shows,[1] and not only is it a violation of the Constitution but also destructive of vital principles, and injurious to the church in many ways. Some who favored the recent move may not have seen its illegality, but now the entire church should realize the fact and demand a change of policy.

The missionary bishop was constitutionally limited in his episcopal jurisdiction to the foreign mission for which he was elected. Not so, however, in the case of a general superintendent. He was not elected for any limited foreign mission field, and could not legally be so elected. He was elected a general superintendent for "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America," and "for the United States of America," as the history and the law declare, and, under the law of the church, and, particularly, the Constitution of the church, they could not be restricted to a special field, or limited in their functions. They never were elected for a particular foreign field, or for any foreign mission field, and, it seems likely that some do not, or will not expect to stay in any mission field in any foreign land.

Everybody knows that a general superintendent can be brought back to the United States, and

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[1] *Discipline*, 1920, Constitution, Art. x, §3.

everybody may know that under the theory that some have asserted in action all of the general superintendents in the foreign mission fields can be brought back to the United States and an equal number in the United States can be sent to replace them in foreign countries, but the whole theory is unconstitutional. The placing of general superintendents outside the United States may be forced by votes, but the church is not compelled, or permitted, to do so by the Constitution; and history, law, and usage show that the general superintendent's place is in the United States, and that the right bishop for foreign missions is the missionary bishop. The Constitution of the church plainly says so. That is not only good law but it is sound policy, and makes for economy and effective episcopal administration.

The missionary episcopacy is the kind of episcopacy adapted to the work in and for foreign mission fields. The foreign work, with its peculiarities of race, language, and usage, requires a peculiar preparation, and a permanence of administration that is not certainly met by the uncertain general superintendency but is met by the missionary episcopacy. Then the foreign field requires a man particularly adapted to each particular field, rather than the general qualities expected in the home field.

We must recall that the conditions are quite different in the United States, where there is a practically homogeneous people with one language, one government, and the same general laws and

usages, so that a man who could be a bishop on the New England coast could also equally well administer on the Pacific coast, and the same bishop who could administer on either coast could also preside in the interior. But it could not be so in India or other foreign countries that could be named.

Some superficial thinkers have had a notion that there was something disparaging about the missionary episcopacy, but that is not the thought in other denominations who have the equivalent office. A study of the position, and a comparison with any other episcopacy will show that the missionary episcopate is not an inferior episcopacy, but possibly the greatest in the church—greatest because of the demand upon the individual bishop, and greatest because of the field and the opportunity for achievement. Sometimes, as already shown, the field covers a whole continent, and sometimes it covers a section of the earth, containing many millions of inhabitants, and, in instances, three or four times the population of the United States of America, as, for example, India and China. Compared with these fields, the little "areas" in the United States seem small indeed. Some might say they are hardly to be mentioned in comparison with the vast extent of these foreign territories and their dense populations—empires in themselves.

The missionary bishop is the great empire builder who lays the foundations for future churches, or denominations, which with their pos-

sibilities are beyond present imagination. In these things there is more than enough to fire a bishop's sanctified ambition, and to prove that the work of a missionary bishop is not subordinate or inferior. But it is different and requires the devotion of long years to give it a fair chance and to secure complete success, which cannot be attained by bishops who do not stay but quickly depart and flit from place to place.

The missionary bishopric has been a great success. To be convinced of this we have merely to think of some of those who have borne the title of missionary bishop. We remember Bishop William Taylor, and Bishop Joseph C. Hartzell, in Africa, and Bishop James M. Thoburn and others in India. There was no inferiority in these instances. They were called missionary bishops, but they were bishops, and each was called a bishop, the qualifying word, missionary, which indicated the field, being reserved for legal forms when distinctions were needed.

In none of this, however, is it intended to say or intimate that general superintendents could not do, or have not done good work, in foreign mission fields. To do so would not be correct, and to say they had not done good work would be a gross injustice. This, however, can be admitted without weakening the facts and legal principles which have been presented. Exceptional personal qualities must be recognized and reckoned with.

General superintendents have done monumental work in foreign missions, but they have done so

excellently well in the foreign field, not so much because they were general superintendent bishops, as because of what they were in themselves, and, individually, they would have done as well, and, perhaps better, had they been missionary bishops. They succeeded in spite of their general superintendency.

The good work of Bishop Bashford and Bishop Lewis will readily be recalled, but, though elected general superintendents, they made their success by practically transforming themselves into missionary bishops by clinging to their field and having no thought of being transferred to the United States of America; and the same could be said of others. But what might have been the result if they had had ten years' previous preparation on the field?

The point is that general superintendents are for the United States of America, and missionary bishops are for the foreign missions of the church.

But one may say "What difference does it make? Why is not one as good as the other?" The answer to that is, first, There is a great difference, because, according to the Constitution of the church, the laws, and the usage, the general superintendents are "for the United States," and the missionary bishops are for the foreign mission fields; and, second, because the missionary bishopric is better adapted to the foreign work, and the general superintendency is better adapted to the work in "the United States of America."

Again one may say, "But the General Confer-

ence has assigned bishops who were general superintendents to foreign mission fields," but a General Conference may make a mistake, and a mistake does not make a binding precedent.

Still it may be said that the General Conference is the law-making power in the church. That is true, but it is not the Constitution-making body, and the Constitution is superior to the General Conference. The law-making body of the nation is the Congress, but it has no right to make an unconstitutional law.

The General Conference has no right to violate the Constitution of the church either intentionally or unintentionally, and, in either case, the unconstitutional act would be null and void.

But, it may be asked: "Does not the General Conference have interpretative power? Does it not interpret the Constitution?" In answer, it may be said that up to a certain point it is its duty to interpret the Constitution in order to keep its own acts in harmony with the Constitution, as Congress does; in other words, to interpret its own acts in the effort to insure their constitutionality, but a General Conference has no right to finally and absolutely interpret the Constitution, for that power belongs to the whole church which makes, and can make or unmake the Constitution. A constitutional government implies an interpreting authority above the law-making body.

The primary constitution-making power existed in the body of the ministry in the Annual Conferences and it never gave up its power over the Con-

stitution. It delegated certain limited powers to the delegated General Conference, but on condition that General Conference conform to the Constitution. If it does not, the ministry in the Annual Conferences can take cognizance of the fact and call the General Conference to account. The records also show that the Annual Conferences have been appealed to as against an act of the General Conference, and they pronounced the act unconstitutional and the next succeeding General Conference accepted the decision and reversed itself. It may be said that the Lay Electoral Conferences should now be associated in such a process.

So it is that the General Conference cannot violate or override the Constitution by a mistake, or by its deliberate will; and, if it has made a mistake it should not make it again, but should at once correct its error.

Still it may be asked whether the church having established missions in foreign lands that does not change the situation so as to permit general superintendents to be located in foreign countries. The answer to that question may be a short and final one—No, because the Constitution, which was against it, is still against it, and that the only change made in the Article of the Constitution was to say that another kind of episcopacy could be sent to the foreign missions, and, therefore, was the right kind for the foreign field.

Because foreign missions have been established by The Methodist Episcopal Church it does not

follow that general superintendent bishops can be located abroad. They were made for the United States, were in the "itinerant general superintendency, and could not be localized anywhere."

There were foreign missions long ago, and they existed a long time before any kind of a bishop was located in a foreign country. In those earlier days of foreign missions it was a well-established legal judgment that the only kind of bishops the church had, namely, general superintendents, could not be located in a foreign mission, and this was so well settled, and universally accepted, that in order to have some kind of bishop resident in a foreign mission, the church had to change its Constitution, which it did by adding to the then third Restrictive Rule, the words: "but may elect a Missionary Bishop or Superintendent for any of our foreign Missions, limiting his Episcopal jurisdiction to the same respectively."[1]

Thus the prohibition as to the general superintendency remained as it had been from the beginning, but it was made possible to put missionary bishops, and no other kind of bishops, in foreign fields. Acts to the contrary were errors.

The Constitution stands the same to-day and no individual, or body, can legally violate, ignore, or evade that provision in the Constitution. The only proper bishops for foreign mission fields are missionary bishops.

What is more, the general superintendents are

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[1] *Discipline*, 1920, Const., Art. x, §3, p. 45.

peculiarly protected by the Constitution, and, especially by "The plan of our itinerant general superintendency" (Art. x, §3.), and that plan gives the general superintendents the right and duty of arranging their own work, and the details do not belong to the General Conference, but to themselves. The Board of Bishops decides when and where the general superintendents shall hold Annual Conferences.

In dealing with the episcopacy of the foreign mission fields the fundamental error of the General Conference of 1920 was in sending general superintendents to those fields. The result was that every such field in the church was supplied by general superintendent bishops, the class that legally was intended for the United States of America. So it happened that in one Continent, namely, Asia, the bishops discovered that they all were of the general superintending kind. They found themselves, so to speak, in the places of missionary bishops, and doing the work of missionary bishops, and they found a common, and pretty strong sentiment in the church, and coming from the General Conference, that seemed to want them to be restricted with limitations somewhat like those of the missionary episcopacy, for example, as to the defined field, and as to the possible tenure in the foreign field. Of course the power that sends them to reside abroad can keep them abroad until the end of their lives, or shift them anywhere, but sometimes power and right are not the same.

The reflections of the new general superintendents in the foreign missions seem to have created a condition of uncertainty, and apparently created not a little mental confusion which revealed itself in a series of formulated inquiries. They seemed to ask: "What are we? Why are we general superintendents? If we are general superintendents, why is it expected that we are to be limited like missionary bishops? If we are general superintendent bishops, are we not to act as if we are?"

They did not phrase their questions precisely in this way, but their queries seem to have been "words to that effect."

The primary question they might have asked could have been in this form: Why are we here at all? If we are general superintendents, why are we not in the United States? Or, If we are here, why are we not missionary bishops?

These and many other questions might have occurred to them, and that without any idea of disparaging the work in the missions. As far as we have seen, they make no complaint. Their work is before them and they are willing to take it up. Indeed, they have taken it up. But they find themselves as general superintendents and they seem to want to find out how they should adjust themselves.

These bishops in Asia, feeling the incongruity of their present position, came together to study the situation, and they prepared a communication which they addressed "to the Board of Bishops at

home," which means the United States of America.

In this communication they present the difficulties which they think need solution, and the primary difficulty is that they are general superintendents located in foreign mission fields. The presumption is that if they were missionary bishops in charge of foreign work they would have none of these perplexities. How to fit in there, and in the general system, at the same time, seems the problem. If they were assigned to the United States, the adjustment would be clear.

The cause of the confusion is the failure to conform to the constitutional system which would place the general superintendents in the United States of America, and supply the foreign fields with missionary bishops. Whatever the inquiries of the bishops in Asia may mean to them, or whatever they may seem to mean to the casual reader, it must be evident that the situation never would have arisen if missionary bishops had been placed in the foreign fields, or if general superintendents had not been sent outside the United States. That is the cause of the commotion, and, if the things done could now be reversed, the agitation would cease, and there would be a great calm, because the constitutional and natural order would prevail.

If it be asked what should be done, the answer is to undo what has been done. The thing to do is to correct the error. Readjust so as to create the right situation. Restudy and obey the Constitu-

tion of the church. Retain the general superintendency for the home church in the United States and elect missionary bishops for the foreign mission field.

If it be suggested that the missionary episcopacy has been destroyed, as some seem to have imagined, we must ask what destroyed it, and when and how was it destroyed?

If it is said it was destroyed by the act and attitude of the General Conference of 1920, then it should be asked: How did the General Conference of 1920 destroy it? and any attempt to show that it did will only reveal that it did not do so in any sense.

It will be admitted that the General Conference transformed the remaining effective missionary bishops into general superintendent bishops, and it failed to elect any new missionary bishops, and that is all, but all that did not destroy the missionary episcopacy.

In the first place, retired missionary bishops still live, are in evidence, and are recognized and honored by the church. In the second place, the General Conference did not destroy the missionary episcopacy, and could not have done so, even if it had tried.

The missionary episcopacy is still in the book of *Discipline* and in the law of the church, and, what is more important, it still is in the Constitution of the church, which is beyond the power of the General Conference to change directly or indirectly.

The Constitution still distinctly states that the missionary bishop is the proper kind of bishop to be located in a foreign mission field. In substance the Constitution says the general superintendency was to be preserved as it had been from the early years of the church, but that the General Conference, after the amendment of 1856, may elect "a missionary bishop or superintendent for any of our foreign missions, limiting his episcopal jurisdiction to the same respectively" (Constitution, Art. x, §3), and it does not say that it can elect any other kind of bishop for, or locate any other kind of bishop in, a foreign mission.

There it is, still in the Constitution, undestroyed, and, as far as the constitutional law goes, not devitalized, and under it, the General Conference can and ought to elect missionary bishops for foreign mission fields, and is in duty bound to send missionary bishops to foreign fields if any bishops go at all.

The act of one General Conference does not forever bind all subsequent General Conferences, and other General Conferences are to follow. The General Conference of 1920 has gone, and precisely the same delegates will never convene again.

Another thing that the General Conference of 1920 did was the so-called election of a new kind of general superintendency which was not authorized by the Constitution of the Church, and which was not according to a regular constitutional election. This was in electing two so-called

Negro General Superintendents—a thing unknown to the Constitution of the Church.

If they were elected anything they were not elected general superintendents. In the ballot they were called Negro General Superintendents, and that was a thing unknown to and in violation of the Constitution of the church. It was an illegal attempt to make a new general superintendency which had no standing in the constitutional law of the denomination. To attempt to class them as general superintendents when they are not is a great wrong to the church and a wrong to everybody in it, including the parties themselves.

CHAPTER XII

EXPERT EVIDENCE

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On this subject one might reason very satisfactorily from his general knowledge, or the results of special study, and many might ask nothing more, but when right deductions are sustained by the testimony of persons who have a direct and intimate knowledge of the facts and a personal experience of matters to which reference is made, the conclusions are not only strengthened, but become practically overwhelming. Many might be called upon to testify, but the force depends not upon the number of witnesses, but upon the quality of the evidence.

Since writing the foregoing pages it was our good fortune to read the opinion of one who can justly claim to give expert testimony, for he knows the United States of America, and has lived and wrought for years in mission fields in two continents, Asia and South America. With long experience in the home church and mission fields, thus touching three Continents, and besides having been both a missionary bishop and a general superintendent, he is an exceedingly competent witness.

The Reverend Bishop William F. Oldham, to whom we refer, has an article on "Bishops for

Foreign Areas," in *The Christian Advocate,* of July 20, 1922, in which he says:

"The missionary episcopacy was never a matter of complaint from the fields in which it obtained. Stirring remarks were sometimes made at home. Some episcopal lips named it a 'bob-tailed episcopacy,' which may have been true, since it lacks the fluttering appendages with which to brush off such fly-bites. Others, earnest missionary advocates, thought it belittled our foreign missions to have their bishops of any different range of privileges from the home bishops. But the missionary bishops themselves, and the great bulk of the missionaries associated with them, recognized that for the purposes of his work the local bishop had all the powers that were necessary, and if he could not exercise episcopal powers in the homeland, that did not affect his efficiency in his own area. There never was any question as to his acceptability by the home church when addressing himself to the cultivation of missionary sentiment or pressing upon it the peculiar needs of his own field. Indeed, there was a time in our history when Thoburn of India and Hartzell of Africa were easily the most popular speakers on missionary themes in the whole church, and were more eagerly sought for in great missionary occasions than any. In those days it might have been said that to the church Thoburn was India and Hartzell was Africa, and in any assembly of the bishops the fact that these men were distinctly committed to foreign missions for

life gave their presence a certain distinctive note which was an asset to their foreign fields. That they did not preside at the General Conference (not a thing to be grasped at) nor in Annual Conferences at home, etc., were very minor luxuries for lack of which there was no great repining among either these bishops or their fellow workers. Indeed, when a man's mind and heart were full of the great problems of any foreign field it would have been doubtful wisdom to put under his presidency a home Conference of which he had no close knowledge and of the immediate background of those local questions he, presumably, knew little or nothing. . . . These limitations upon the missionary episcopacy then, did not cause any curtailment either in efficiency or in real availability for the work they had in hand, at home or abroad.'"[1]

These are weighty words from the ripe experience of a man specially fitted to speak on this question. He spent long years in the missionary field in India, he was elected a missionary bishop for India and, after he had served for years, he relinquished that position and served as a missionary secretary, and after that he was elected a general superintendent and he has served in that office over six years. He knows the foreign field, he knows the missionary episcopacy, and he knows the general superintendency, and his testimony in favor of the missionary episcopate has special value and should carry conviction to every

[1] *The Christian Advocate*, New York, July 20, 1922.

mind. The deduction from his declaration is that the best form of episcopacy for the foreign mission field is the missionary episcopate.

He writes with wisdom and common sense when he says:

"The fact of the man having spent fifteen or twenty-five years on the field, learning the ways and sinking into the soul of a people, was an asset in the missionary bishop whose absence will necessarily be felt in many cases without the knowledge of any but discerning and discreet missionaries and the national leaders, and both these classes are likely to bear in silence the limitations of their chief officers.

"And again, nowhere as in our foreign fields is continuity of administration so necessary for anything approaching efficiency."

In such a discussion the nature of the people on the foreign field must be remembered and constantly considered.

Bearing upon this Bishop Oldham tells us:

"Your Oriental, African, or even your Latin man, does not give his confidence easily to a stranger, particularly when that stranger is new to his surroundings. The time element must be reckoned with in estimating probable efficiency in foreign fields a great deal more than at home. In the gallant days of old when a Bishop dashed in a few days before Conference, and rushed out a few hours after, we were so accustomed to the amazing phenomenon that we failed to weigh what it meant to more lethargic peoples unused to our

familiarity with suddenness. Now that we ourselves are beginning to really believe that bishops, like others, need time and opportunity to acquaint themselves with their fields, it will be more easily recognized that people less agile, more secretive, and in many cases, prejudiced against the authority of foreigners, need more continuous supervision by persons whom they have had time and opportunity to learn to trust.

"In the case of the missionary episcopacy this continuity was secured by the very terms of the appointment."

Bishop Oldham analyzes the facts of history and states, what will be conceded instantly by any one who has considered the assignment of general superintendents to residences in foreign fields, that there is little, if any, disposition on the part of the bishops themselves, or some think, on the part of the General Conference, to settle the general superintendents permanently in foreign missions where of all fields a considerable degree of permanence is required. Others think that some of the managers are aiming to make general superintendents as permanent in the foreign, as they have been in the home field. This, however, is contrary to the law of the church.

On this point Bishop Oldham says:

"Of all the thirteen living effective general superintendents who are now or have been in the past in foreign areas, who were not at the time of their election missionary bishops, there are but three in their second quadrennium, while three

are back in the home fields. Ten are in their first quadrennium. That is, of six superintendents three returned from their foreign residence to home areas after four years.

"Is there any reason to forecast the willing return to a second quadrennium of more than five of the ten now in foreign residence? While a fours years' term is vastly better than the former four weeks, it yet does not make for the larger efficiency. At this point I would say that the whole church was probably moved by two great general superintendents in China, Brothers Bashford and Lewis, into thinking that such continuity of administration and such absorption in the land and people as they manifested would be the common characteristics of all sent into the foreign areas. But is this not expecting too much from human nature even when sanctified by episcopal election? And in saying this I would not be held to reflect in the least upon the successors of the great China bishops, for they are amongst the choicest spirits in the church."

The fact that comparatively few of the general superintendents remain long in the foreign fields to which they have been assigned is plainly against the policy of sending them abroad in that way, however the fact may be explained. It may be said that some return soon because of climatic reasons, and failure of health on the part of the unacclimated bishop or some member of his family, but whatever may be the specific reason, it raises a question against the wisdom of sending

general superintendents to reside in foreign countries where they have had no previous experience.

Generally speaking, climatic difficulties are avoided when the bishops are chosen from men who have been years on the field and are acclimatized, as has been shown in cases where men of the locality have been made missionary bishops.

Bishop Oldham remarks:

"When we turn to the administration of the fields themselves the change in the methods of electing and appointing bishops becomes a matter for serious consideration. The question may thus be brusquely stated. Does superintendency by general superintendents promise more efficiency or better outcomes than by the former method in India and Africa? Apart from the supposed limitations I have already discussed, a more significant objection lay against the missionary episcopacy that the choice of men was restricted to those either from the missionaries on the field, or from men of known devotion to foreign missions who were not elected to other General Conference offices.

"But was this an objection? Even if in any of these great fields there were no men of commanding prominence—which I do not for a moment concede—yet have there not always been men who command the confidence of the national church and of their fellow missionaries, and would not the selection of such men have secured permanence in administration, as well as that hinter land of knowledge of peoples and variant civilizations,

the absence of which is rarely suspected by men who, successful at home, are suddenly plunged into responsibility abroad?"

With the new policy of sending general superintendent bishops to foreign mission fields, the chances are against the foreign missionary, or the minister of the native church in the foreign field being elected to the general superintendency. The preponderance of voters in the General Conference are, and will be for some time, from the home church, and the overwhelming probability will be that they will elect bishops who are of the home church. The exception must be exceedingly rare.

That will mean that the ministers of the foreign mission will be almost invariably passed by and that, of course, will not always be satisfactory to the native church where educated and competent ministers are being developed. Of course it may be said that one or two men have been elected general superintendents from the foreign field, but hardly that, and in the large number elected in 1920, only one was so elected and he was from Europe. This, however, does not include the missionary bishops who were made general superintendents, as they were exceptional, and not an election from the ordinary ministry.

In his wise observations, Bishop Oldham says:

"Again there is the growing racial consciousness of our foreign churches. For a long time it has been fondly believed that our Oriental Methodism was entirely content to be almost entirely led by foreign leaders. However this may be, they

surely cannot be expected to remain so. This would argue such excess of humility or defect of self-respect as ought not to be looked for. With the utmost affection and respect for their present leaders the national churches would be in danger of forfeiting our esteem if they did not begin to feel and voice aspiration for a larger place for native leadership. It may reasonably be suspected that the mild Indian and the patient Chinaman will remain neither mild nor patient if there be not a little more haste to make for him a larger place in the official leadership of his church.

"Now it was always possible for an Indian, or a Chinaman, or a South American to be elected a missionary superintendent, though the fact that none ever was may afford some ground for searchings of the Anglo-Saxon heart.

"But when may we look for the election to the general superintendency of any of these far off and unknown sons of the church; unknown, I mean, to the great bulk of the delegates?"

Practically never, must be the answer. Under the new policy which some would thrust upon The Methodist Episcopal Church, absolutely never. First, because the composition of the General Conference would prevent it; and, second, because with an exchangeable general superintendency, permitting the foreign field to be forever manned by those who to the natives are foreigners, and, if there were native general superintendents, making it possible to translate the native general superintendent of the foreign field to an

assignment in the United States of America, there would be a situation that would be intolerable for the natives in the foreign mission, and equally unacceptable for the church in the United States. The ultimate rights of a people or a race would cause rebellion against such an arrangement. It is quite clear, however, that the General Conference would not elect a native of certain countries to be a general superintendent with the possibility or probability that such a bishop would be shifted to a residence in the United States, and the native would not want to leave his native country. But once a man has been made a general superintendent, all that would be possible; but it could not be with the missionary bishopric. Further, facts show that to the missionary bishopric it would be easier to elect a native or a long-time missionary on the foreign field.

It is interesting to notice how Bishop Oldham makes distinctions between the church in the United States and the foreign mission fields. In his mind the distinction is clearly marked.

He speaks of "the homeland," "the home church," and "at home or abroad." He writes of "a home Conference," and "the home bishops." He says "at home," and mentions "home fields" and "home areas," and indicates a contrast between them and "the foreign areas," meaning the foreign mission fields. Referring to the mission organizations in foreign countries, he writes of "our foreign churches," he uses the title "the national church" and calls them "the national

churches," meaning the membership made up of the native people of those lands; and in a similar way he refers to "the national leaders," and, on the other hand, from the native's point of view, he speaks of the American and other bishops, from other lands, as "foreign leaders," that is to the natives in the missions abroad.

All these show the natural working of a mind that is peculiarly fitted to take the point of view, on the one hand, of the American who recognizes The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America as the mother church in the homeland, and at the same time can view the offspring of this American church in foreign countries, developing amid their own racial, linguistic, historical, and national peculiarities, and growing into a true, but transplanted Methodism, which, though like the mother church, will have variations, due to its different environment, and race inheritance, with its own ambitions and native aspirations, which may require, will require, and do require peculiarities of treatment different from that which pertains in the home church in America.

That being the case, it may be unwise to try to fasten on every foreign mission all the methods of the mother church made up of another race with another history. The distinction between the home church and its foreign missions must be definitely maintained.

CHAPTER XIII

THE DENOMINATIONAL MISSION

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The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America has sent its missionaries into many parts of the world and established foreign missions in all the continents and in a number of the islands of a number of the seas.

What it has attempted in this regard must to some seem rather ambitious for a single denomination, but it was not an ambition for its own aggrandizement, but a desire to discharge its duty to the world in obedience to the great commission of Christ to go into the world and preach his gospel.

In these efforts it does not expect to do all that the entire Christian Church should and can do, but it hopes to do its share. All the churches have their responsibility, and no one denomination can do everything, but, all working for the common object, Christianity should be spread throughout the entire world.

The Methodist Episcopal Church does not presume to claim that it has done its full part, but the unprejudiced observer, who has accurate knowledge of what has been attempted and accomplished, will say that it has done very much.

It has ventured into many countries, sent many Christian workers, planted many churches, and

established many benevolent institutions. Throughout the years it has freely contributed vast sums of money to carry on the work, and very recently it has raised a phenomenal sum amounting to many millions of dollars, in connection with the celebration of the centenary of the organization of its missionary society in 1819. Before that date, however, it had done missionary work in foreign lands. All that for more than a hundred years meant very much for what really was a young church, and, as it is to-day, compared with ancient churches.

The Methodist Episcopal Church sent out from the home land its influence in various directions and in many foreign parts, not that it might rule the world, but that it might Christianize the foreign peoples in these lands. It did not mean to be a world government, and it did not propose to put itself in position where the peoples of the world could rule it, and it never intended to rule the world or to be ruled by the world. It was an American church in the United States of America and with no thought of being anything else than an American church, but an American church helping the world as far as it might be able.

It undertook to place the leaven of Christ's gospel in the lump here and there, hoping that it would leaven the local lump of humanity in this and that place, so that after awhile, the gospel influence from one point would come in contact with a similar influence from other places, and so on and on until the whole world would be leavened.

This has been going on through the years until now The Methodist Episcopal Church is the mother church of many foreign missions. They have been nurtured by the mother church in the United States and now they are developing and pressing on to maturity, where they will have the natural impulse to care for themselves and manage their own affairs. When they are ready for that the mother will give them her blessing and still give them an affectionate interest and more.

In the United States The Methodist Episcopal Church is The Methodist Episcopal Church because it believes that is best, and so it preaches the doctrines of that church and conducts its affairs according to the polity of the denomination. Hence when the membership of this church contributes for the support of foreign missions it naturally demands that these missions shall be carried on according to Methodist Episcopal ideas.

The Methodist Episcopal Church therefore expects that the missionary management, with its offices in the United States, and its missionaries abroad, shall administer in the foreign field in harmony with the doctrines, the polity, and the usages of this church, and that, while the workers in the foreign missions shall there spread Christian truth, it shall be Christianity after the Methodist Episcopal type.

This is the type it has known and tested, and in which it believes as the purest and best, and as most in accord with the teachings of the New Testament, and because of this faith it conscien-

tiously holds that this type of church should be carried by The Methodist Episcopal Church to its missions in foreign lands, and that its Christian doctrine should be the interpretation of its own church.

This is calculated to make foreign duplications of itself, and the foundations of their organization are laid on that plan, and the further formation is expected to be carried on according to these principles, and the ministers and members are to be trained according to the laws and usages of this church, so that when they have self-government these forms and methods will be perpetuated, but, when the missions become independent, they will be free to modify as they may deem necessary.

To do all this those in the management must be extremely circumspect and always on guard against adverse tendencies, and particularly those that might not be suspected because of popular support and skillful propaganda.

Some of these dangerous influences may chance to lie under the cover of extreme but specious presentations of cooperation and federation. Both cooperation and federation are to be commended when they are the right kind, and they may not be regarded as the right kind simply because they are so styled. When they are the wrong kind they are apt to be disastrous, particularly in the case of this denomination.

It is a settled principle that denominational work must be done in a denominational way, and this is reasonable because in the denominational

mission the denomination is responsible and cannot pass the responsibility over to another.

For this reason the direct control of its educational system should be with the denomination. It should educate its own, and particularly, where the religious idea is involved in it, and where interpretations of the Sacred Scriptures have a part it should be self-evident that the denomination should have the control.

Much has been said in favor of union schools and colleges in foreign fields, and it may be admitted that something may be said for them on the basis of economy; but the financial matter is not the main thing, and, as a practical fact, it is more than doubtful whether there is any real financial saving, and one may wonder how much financial saving the treasurer's accounts show.

Suppose the Methodist Episcopal mission in a foreign country has a school or college of its own, and is persuaded to unionize it, and goes into a partnership with five or six other denominations, with their joint ownership and management. Where does The Methodist Episcopal Church find itself? It no longer has its school or college, it has no longer the control, and it has only a fraction of the faculty and a fraction of the board of trustees. In other words it is only a minority stockholder.

It may be held that the other churches are no better off, but that does not relieve the predicament of The Methodist Episcopal Church. It has lost something, and lost very much. It has

involved itself with persons of different views from those it holds and it has put its young people under different influences from its own.

The arrangement is even more objectionable where the education is theological. We heard a prominent man refer to the unionized theological school in a foreign mission field, and we cannot forget the laughing way he referred to the teaching of denominational doctrines, and he said all of that was done in only two weeks in a year. He seemed to think it was a joke, and, perhaps it was. Such unionization makes possibilities of confusion, in the faculties, in the trustees, and in the kind of men selected. Surely, there are enough legitimate opportunities for fraternity and federation without taking such risks.

If the work were simply secular, the matter might be different, but mission work is religious, and touches the personal influence and the religious atmosphere, while it imperils the Methodist Episcopal idea in the Methodist Episcopal mission. This I must say though I have always stood for fraternization between the denominations.

For the sake of the foreign mission special attention should always be given the home church in the homeland. The vigor and spirituality of the home church should always be kept up. The stability of the home church should be maintained. Some things should be regarded as settled, and there should not be radical revolutions in the principles and the polity of the church between mails.

The home church should always be sincerely sympathetic toward its foreign missions, though in the supervision it should exercise a firm control. It directs and trains that the peoples may learn how to govern their own affairs, as they become familiar with the doctrines and polity of the church that sent them the gospel. With this training the mission will have the groundwork for future prosperity even if some modifications come later.

The mother church obeys the commandment to go and preach the gospel, but, having done so, it is not compelled to stay as a ruling force forever. When, after its teaching and training, Christianity still remains, it will be free to move on from place to place, and go on throughout the world as far as it may be able.

While it does this, the mother church must preserve, and does preserve, its own separate entity, and identity, as an American church, and this it must continue to be, for it is The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

CHAPTER XIV

THE NEXT STEP NOT A FALSE STEP

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As to the question of the organic relation of the mother church to its foreign missions there is growing up a literature of its own, generally written by persons who have had experience in foreign fields or who have been closely connected with the cause of missions.

Among these publications there has recently appeared a little book entitled *The Next Step*, which fell into our hands since we wrote the foregoing chapters. The author of the work is a missionary in China, the Reverend Paul Hutchinson, of Shanghai, and recently connected with the Centenary Movement of The Methodist Episcopal Church.

The book is written in a sprightly style, and contains important facts which are worthy of attention, and have value, even when the reader may not be able to accept all his deductions.[1]

The author assumes that The Methodist Episcopal Church has taken certain steps in relation to its foreign missions, and reasons that the steps already taken necessitate another step, and he endeavors to show what "The Next Step" ought

[1] Paul Hutchinson: *The Next Step, a Study in Methodist Polity;* New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1922, pp. 119, 16mo.

to be. The author's statements strongly support what we have written about the unrest and the decided trend toward nationalism and self-government among the peoples in foreign mission fields.

Japan stands out as an illustration and a demonstration of the tendency which we have indicated, and, referring to the independence which came to the Methodist Episcopal Mission in Japan the author says: "The fact is that it was an action brought about by forces over which no body in America could exert control."[1] Then he says, "There are tremendous nationalistic currents flowing through Asia in these days comprising the most vital, most helpful, and the dangerous realities influencing the future of this continent."[2]

And this he follows by saying that "Long before Japan fought China for the leadership of the Far East and the right to demonstrate her theorem, the increase of the nationalistic spirit had pointed toward the setting up of independent national churches."[3]

All this shows that the trend in the foreign missions is toward self-government and independence. The statements of the author are admissions of this natural and actual drift. To strengthen him in these contentions he quotes an author of some years ago, who speaks more particularly about India. He cites statements in Pro-

[1] *The Next Step*, p. 27.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 27.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 28, 29.

fessor I. J. Fleming's *Devolution in Mission Administration.*[1] Thus he quotes: "So long as the foreign missionaries keep entire control of the affairs of the church in India, and govern it in their own way, instead of adapting it to suit the country, the church will have a foreign stamp on it and the non-Christians will continue to regard it as an exotic and Occidental religion."

His facts and contentions go to show that some change between the mission fields and the mother church in government and in methods is inevitable. With the aspiration in the foreign missions for self-determination, or independence, either the mother church must change its relation to the foreign field, or the foreign mission will change its relation to the mother church, and this may be said without any criticism on the home church. The mother church cannot go on forever adding foreign field to foreign field, with the increasing expense, while its offspring, feeling the natural impulse toward freedom and self-determination, goes on expressing discomfort and dissatisfaction. The home church cannot forever bear such a burden, and the feeling of the mission is likely to increase. In the family, parents see the inevitable, which is also the natural, and they let the children go out with their blessing and so retain their love. The church should be just as wise when the right time arrives for the foreign mission to conduct its own affairs. That the church is at least thinking

[1]New York, Fleming H. Revell Co., 1916; quoted in *The Next Step*, p. 18.

what it should do is pretty plain. At least it is beginning to think about this important subject.

The author of *The Next Step* starts out with allusions to what the General Conference has done, and, particularly, the late General Conference of 1920. He asks: "Does the church realize what it has done, or is in process of doing?" and remarks, "The Methodist Episcopal Church has before this entered upon policies of far-reaching import when the majority of its members had little conception of what was in progress."[1] He states that "The Methodist Episcopal Church is, apparently, committed to a great adventure," but his evidence is simply an action of the General Conference which he so interprets.

But, even if the body did intend such a policy, is it correct to say that, because a General Conference passed a certain measure, The Methodist Episcopal Church had deliberately done it, and especially, when the policy was to unconstitutionally change the organic law of the church, when it is clear that even the General Conference cannot lawfully infringe on the Constitution of the General Conference and of the whole church? Certainly not. The whole church is greater than its creature, the General Conference.

Referring to one thing that went through the recent General Conference of 1920, which we have in previous pages scrutinized, criticised, and condemned, he says: "Future historians of The Methodist Episcopal Church will probably agree

[1] *The Next Step*, p. 15.

that the most important action taken at the General Conference of 1920 was that which placed in the book of *Discipline* the amended paragraph at present numbered 95." What the author speaks of as paragraph 95, and so it is numbered and arranged in the printed book of *Discipline,* is really a whole chapter, with the caption: "Chapter IV. Central Mission Conferences," containing numerous sections. He uses an expressive word when he says, "how blindly we may be progressing toward radical alterations." "Blindly" is a proper word, for of late that is the way many things have "progressed," and gradually, but steadily, things vital to the church have been swept away, and the people did not realize it until some time after the deed has been done.

Some of the things to which he refers are plainly unconstitutional, and therefore, are null and void, and, when the General Conference of 1920 inserted into the Chapter on "Central Mission Conferences" things that are absolutely unconstitutional, as it did, they were of no effect, for the insertion was not legal. This has been shown in Chapter X, particularly in connection with items in the Chapter on "Central Mission Conferences." The church did not do it, and the church is not bound to conform to an unconstitutional act of the General Conference, but should arise in its might and demand that these illegal insertions be taken out. The whole church constitutionally is higher than the General Conference, and it is time that all should know that the delegated Gen-

eral Conference is not a supreme and irresponsible body.

Here is where *The Next Step* has a bad footing on the assumption that the church has legally put these illegal things into the chapter on the "Central Mission Conferences." This is not *terra firma.* There is no firm ground here from which to take the next step, and the author's plan for "The Next Step" should be revised. What this particular plan is may more fully appear.

In mentioning what he terms "a great adventure of The Methodist Episcopal Church," the author says, "It is seeking to establish an ecclesiastical organization world wide in scope but democratic in nature."[1]

Probably the church generally does not know that it is "committed to a great adventure," so described, but history and reason show that such a proposal involves a contradiction, and that it is a practical contradiction to speak of "an ecclesiastical organization world-wide in scope," and yet "democratic in nature." This is so because a world-wide church embraces an expanse so vast, with so many different countries and diversities of peoples, and with such impracticable distances that it is destructive of genuine and proportionate representation, and tends to, and necessitates, an autocratic centralization in the effort to secure an effective government. This is illustrated by the history of the Church of Rome. If we ask, Can an ecclesiastical government be world-wide

[1] *The Next Step,* p. 11.

and be truly democratic everywhere? The answer must be in the negative. In proof we cite the Roman so-called ecumenical Church.

The author admits that this is an exceptional aim, and that the other Protestant denominations are or would be against such a scheme. Hence he says: "None of the other Protestant bodies holds before itself any such goal. It is doubtful if even the other members of the Methodist family have in view such an outcome for their missionary efforts. These other churches, Methodist and otherwise, would probably judge such an undertaking as The Methodist Episcopal Church has entered upon a mistaken policy, holding that the building of the universal kingdom of God may best be secured through the founding and growth of national churches.'"[1]

Then why should The Methodist Episcopal Church go contrary to the conviction, the judgment, and the purpose of all "the other Protestant bodies"? There must be something peculiar about such a purpose.

However, he states that what has been done was "without formal action," which is equivalent to saying that it was not legally done, and that means it was not done at all in any way to bind the denomination.

Sometimes it is a little difficult to determine exactly what is the view of the author. He uses the word "international," but we take it that personally he is not an imperialist, for his facts and his

[1] *The Next Step*, p. 11.

reasoning show that for the foreign mission fields he aims at very complete self-government, or independence, so that the foreign mission in each country will be practically or actually independent, each controlling itself. Anything else would be inconsistent with sound logic based on his facts and statements. The terrible events of recent years should warn us against the "international" in the church or the church in the "international."

The author states that "From the beginning until long after the church had entered upon its second century there seemed no conception, but that, when any branch outside the borders of the United States had reached a measure of self-confidence, it should be set apart as a distinct entity.'"[1]

To some this may seem a rather strong statement. In the cases of Canada and Japan, they sought their independence, and there was no haste on the part of the church in granting it to either country. If the statement was that the church possessed the power to "set apart" the foreign mission "as a distinct entity" it would not be so surprising. The writer, however, takes no exception to the statement. The right was admitted.

The author says, "In this day when the very words 'nationalism' and 'internationalism,' 'democracy,' 'self-government,' and 'self-determination' are becoming focal for the life of the whole

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[1] *The Next Step*, p. 22.

world, it is no small thing to see The Methodist Episcopal Church, *our* church, *alone* in Protestantism adopting a policy which may in time give it as wide-sweeping an ecclesiastical authority as that of the Church of Rome." Surely, it would be no small thing, but we do not see the church doing it yet. The example of the Church of Rome and the practice of Protestantism should deter it from such a suicidal course.[1]

If the author means by that that in the treatment of its foreign missions The Methodist Episcopal Church should not endeavor to retain governmental control and become a world church, with a world government, we have no objection to file. That is the very thing the church should not be, for that would lead to an ecclesiastical government like that of the Church of Rome, and curse both the missions and the church.

Such a church would be compelled to develop a strongly centralized government, and distance and increasing bulk would necessitate a diminution of representation, which in the end would mean growing strength at the head center and relatively increasing weakness in the remote mission in the matter of free local government, and, in time, that would mean a loss of independent action, or a revolt, which would cause the mission to break away from the parent body at the center.

The most of those who are aiming at a world church will, if they continue, logically reach an imperialistic government like that of ecclesiastical

[1] *The Next Step*, p. 15.

Rome. They may not see it at first, and do not wish it, but as they are going it is inevitable. It is the part of wisdom to open their eyes and see the truth at once.

The author indicates that there are two courses, one of which must be taken; that followed by the Church of Rome and that illustrated by the British Empire. He says: "If one is willing to accept the principle of autocracy in order to secure a world church that *works,* Rome presents the perfect example."[1]

True, but we do not want the Roman method. Nevertheless, whether we want it or not, a world church, with a world government, would, in spite of our contrary wishes, tend to a Romish centralization.

Then he points to the analogy of the British Empire. This is far better, infinitely better than Roman imperialism. In the matter of secular and political government it has been a wonderful and happy development, but for a religious government, as suggested for the foreign missions, the parallel is not perfect. Even the British method is not the ideal for the church. Further, the British system may not have passed its final test, though it went through the Great War so magnificently. Yet it can hardly be said to have matured. With growing and strengthening dominions and present dependencies passing out of their dependent relation, no one can say that they will not pass into an absolute governmental military and eco-

[1] *The Next Step,* p. 37.

nomical independence that will break up the present combination, or place the center of power in Canada, in Australia, or at some other geographical point, so that Great Britain will no longer be relatively the great power, or even the great center.

Of course the British dominions and dependencies do not send the same proportionate representation to the Parliament in London as do the British Isles. That would mean were the British system applied that the foreign mission would not have its old representation in the General Conference, for if the mother church gives up its control of the mission, or, in other words, lets the mission control its own affairs, that would mean that the mission would cease to send delegates to control the mother church. In other words, if the home church gives up control of the foreign mission the mission must not control the mother church.

If The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America should abdicate her supreme position, and simply become a part of a world church, and the foreign missions became parts of the world church, and these missions as equally parts of this church with proportionate power, as they grow and their mass increases would in course of time become proportionately greater, and, it is conceivable, they would greatly reduce the relative power of the church in the United States, and, in course of time, actually overwhelm the American section, or shift the center of gravity and influence from America.

There is a better way than to imitate the British Empire, or to have a world government, and that is for The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America to preserve its entity and identity, and let the foreign missions develop their own organization and become homogeneous and independent entities, but with the governmental separation have them bound together by a moral and religious affiliation with the mother church in the United States, as the great source of inspiration and the suggestive guide of this moral and spiritual association.

It is unthinkable that all these varying offspring, bound together in a world church, can grow on with their own ambitions, demanding more and more liberty to do as they please, each doing, thinking, and believing, and working differently, and yet have a homogeneous church everywhere, and The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America not be radically changed, but remain the same. A world church, in course of time, must affect, change, and injure, and perhaps destroy The Methodist Episcopal Church in America. Our look must take in more than a quadrennium or two. It must take in the long future.

The author presents some statistics which show the increasing strength of the foreign missions and indicate that these missions are about ready for self-support, self-direction, and independence, and this goes to show that these foreign missions, if independent, could carry on their work as local

or national churches, and certainly with a little help from the home church. He interjects strictures upon the church services and the doctrinal formulations of the missions, as they have them from the mother church, and clearly reveals that doctrinally and formally he would have the foreign churches, and, presumably, his world church, very different from The Methodist Episcopal Church of to-day and of the past.

Thus, he says: "It is questionable whether the church in these lands will forever require as a test of membership acceptance of such an exotic document as the Twenty-five Articles of Religion. It is difficult to conceive of any vitality in a World Church built upon such a foundation."[1]

The author admits that to have a Methodist Episcopal world church will compel the sacrifice of doctrinal standards. In view of that, he says: "I think that finally one of the costs of a world church that we will have to face and pay is the return to doctrinal standards so simple that any child can understand them and so reasonable that any child will accept them. We will have to swing away from that monument of Anglo-Saxon Protestantism which John Wesley, in a moment of anxiety when he felt his grip slipping, wished upon the Methodists of America."[2]

In this he particularly refers to the Articles of Religion, though his phrasing is all-comprehensive, and means much more than the Article. To

[1] *The Next Step*, pp. 94, 95.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 95.

call these Articles of The Methodist Episcopal Church, "that monument of Anglo-Saxon Protestantism" seems to demand some qualification. Even the Thirty-nine Articles of the English Reformed Religion were the result of the labors of Continental as well as English theologians. So they might be called a monument of world Protestantism, but the Twenty-five Articles of Religion of The Methodist Episcopal Church are very different, and belong to a much later period, and it is therefore, incorrect to say that "John Wesley, in a moment of anxiety when he felt his grip slipping, wished [that monument of Anglo-Saxon Protestantism] upon the Methodists of America," and his closing statement is not justified by the history.

The author plainly states his desire and evident purpose to banish from the foreign mission the public religious services of The Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Articles of Religion of the said church, but he nowhere tells us explicitly, or tells us in any way, just what he would, or will put in their place. One thing, however, is perfectly plain, namely, that he would not have the Methodist Episcopal system, for he would abandon the services and abandon the Articles of Religion of this church, and he makes it doubtful whether he would have any expressed or formulated doctrines at all.

That seems to be what he means when he says that we must pay "one of the costs of a world church" by giving up the present "doctrinal

standards," and taking up those that are "so simple that any child . . . [any child?] . . . can understand them." Anything that any child could understand would be very inadequate for a church of mature people.

Thus, with great clearness, and positiveness, he declares in favor of demanding no religious opinions at all, which he asserts was Wesley's way, but when he asserts, or suggests, that that was Wesley's way, he misunderstands and misrepresents Wesley, and makes him contradict himself in word and practice. Every now and then Wesley is quoted in support of radical liberalism, when the quotations have been wrested from their immediate connection, or from the general, habitual, and specific utterances of Wesley throughout his life. This amounts to a practical and actual misrepresentation. The author seems to have been caught by some of the current clippings from utterances of Wesley, which were very real misrepresentations of Wesley because they were incomplete quotations, or were taken out of their qualifying connection, or were not placed in the light of Wesley's established action and general teachings.

If one makes an utterance that is lacking in clearness, or without his usual and consistent method, or if it seems so, he is entitled to have it construed in the light of his clear habitual and deliberate utterances. So Wesley's utterances, occasional or otherwise, should be taken together, and all should be interpreted in the light of what

may be called his standard statements and his habitual action. But, to bolster up his announced positions the author attempts to drag in John Wesley, an apostle of the long-time-ago, as a valiant knight who battled for these present contentions, and he says: "We will have to swing back to that truer basis which Wesley expressed when he wrote: 'The distinguishing marks of a Methodist are not his opinions of any sort. . . . Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thine? . . . If it be, give me thy hand.' "[1]

Now, Wesley was not a man who cared nothing about opinions. He was a man of opinions, and was most positive in his opinions. His whole life shows that. More than that, he expected right opinions on religious or theological opinions from others, and especially demanded them from those associated with himself. That being the case, there must be some qualification of any expression that at first sight makes the impression that he was indifferent to the opinions which others held, and, particularly, as to the opinions of the preachers and people of his own societies. Plainly, he could not use the word "opinions" in the lax fashion of those who do not fully or fairly represent him. Back of the special and qualified use of the word "opinion," was a very positive theological creed.

The quotation which the author gives from Wesley is entirely inadequate either as representative of Wesley, or of the document from which

[1] *The Next Step*, p. 95. (See 2 Kings 10. 15.)

he quotes. *The Character of a Methodist,* which Wesley published in 1742, early in his career, makes six closely printed octavo pages. From this he takes about half a dozen detached lines, quoting the opening sentence, and then a few lines toward the end, thus leaving out nearly all the publication in which Wesley qualifies and elaborates his points.

Thus the author of *The Next Step* quotes "The distinguishing marks of a Methodist are not his opinions of any sort." This is the first sentence of the first paragraph, but, in that very paragraph, Wesley goes on to say: "We believe, indeed, that 'all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God,' and herein we are distinguished from Jews, Turks, and Infidels. We believe the written Word of God to be the only and sufficient rule both of Christian faith and practice; and herein we are fundamentally distinguished from those of the Roman Church. We believe Christ to be the eternal, supreme God; and herein we are distinguished from the Socinians and Arians. But as to all opinions which do not strike at the root of Christianity, we think and let think."[1] That is what Wesley meant, and said, and the omission of these qualifications grossly misrepresents Wesley, who said very much more in the same line in his forty-nine active years which followed.

Now, the fact is that the citation from Wesley

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[1]John Wesley, *The Character of a Methodist,* Wesley's Works, Amer. Ed., New York, vol v., pp. 240, 241.

does not belittle "opinions of any sort." It merely says that "the distinguishing marks of a Methodist are not his opinions." It does not say that he does not care what opinions his members hold, but that mere opinions are not the "distinguishing marks." Of course the "distinguishing marks" are found in the religious character and the spiritual life, but that does not prove that no religious opinions are necessary. On the contrary, opinions and beliefs are at the very basis of religious living.

What is sometimes spoken of as liberality, which means, It makes no difference about creeds, or what you believe, can never be sustained by Wesley and his teachings. The changes have been rung on "Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? . . . If it be, give me thine hand." Some evidently have no distinct idea of their meaning, and some use them as though they were Wesley's own words, when they are, in fact, a quotation from 2 Kings 10. 15, though the citations do not always harmonize with the text in Kings.

The author takes them up and gives them another ring, though we would not like to say that he thought Wesley invented the words and phrases. At the same time one might wonder, if he remembered that one of Wesley's printed sermons is on that text, and that in it Wesley shows what he meant by the scripture which he used. In this sermon he shows there was not intended any of the radical liberalism that the author is proposing to incorporate in the missions in heathen lands.

Wesley shows that the right heart must have right opinions and firm convictions—must have right belief, right living, and right internal experiences. In the sermon on this text he says: "Is thy heart right with God? Dost thou believe his being and his perfection? . . . Hast thou a divine evidence, a supernatural conviction of the things of God? . . . Dost thou believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, 'God over all, blessed forever?' Is he revealed in thy soul? Dost thou know Jesus Christ and him crucified?"

Here in God is the foundation of theology. Here in Christ is the foundation of Christian theology. The right heart implies a right theology which embraces Christ as "God over all." There is nothing in this that teaches that religious opinion is valueless or unnecessary. On the contrary, Wesley implied many doctrinal convictions.

Referring to the phrase "a catholic spirit," Wesley says: "There is scarce any expression which has been more grossly misunderstood, and more dangerously applied than this," and, then, capping the climax, he says: "It is not an indifference to opinions; this is the spawn of hell, not the offspring of heaven." "This unsettledness of thought, this being 'driven to and fro, and tossed about with every wind of doctrine,' is a great curse, not a blessing; an irreconcilable enemy, not a friend to true catholicism. A man of a truly catholic spirit has not now his religion to seek. He is fixed as the sun, in his judgment concerning the main branches of Christian doc-

trine." Wesley evidently was not a latitudinarian.[1]

Let anyone who is tempted to say, or imagine, that Wesley was indifferent to religious opinions ponder these weighty words which contradict certain views that seek currency, and which we are now controverting. These misrepresentations of Wesley I have treated and their falseness exposed at some length in my work on *The Doctrinal Standards of Methodism.*[2]

John Wesley was liberal, but he was not a latitudinarian. He was an evangelical liberal, but, with charitable liberality, he held positive beliefs and demanded them from others in his ecclesiastical organization. Some have tried to affirm that he asked no doctrinal beliefs of those who were admitted into his societies. The author quotes Wesley as saying: "One circumstance more is quite peculiar to the people called Methodists; that is, the terms upon which any person may be admitted to their society. They do not impose, in order to their admission, any opinions whatsoever. . . . One condition and one only is required—a real desire to save their soul." "Or again: 'Is a man a believer in Jesus Christ, and is his life suitable to his profession?' are not only the *main,* but the *sole* inquiries I make in order to his admission into our society."[3] So

[1]Wesley's sermon on the "Catholic Spirit" (Sermon Number XXXIX).

[2]Bishop Thomas B. Neely, *Doctrinal Standards of Methodism*, pp. 82, 83. New York; Fleming H. Revell Company.

[3]*The Next Step*, p. 96.

Wesley states that he demands that the candidate shall be a "believer in Jesus Christ." That means very much. It carries with it belief in God, and in Christ, and connects with many other beliefs. So the statement that there was only one condition for admission into Wesley's society, namely, "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins," needs some elucidation. Some say there is no creed or belief in that, but, to have that desire, the individuual must believe in sin, in the wrath, or judgment to come, in salvation from sin and the penalty for sin, in God who judges and condemns, and in a Saviour who can and will save, and these logically carry with them many other beliefs that together would make a long and comprehensive creed, and Wesley said he did ask: "Is a man a believer in Jesus Christ, and is his life suitable to his profession." It was a comprehensive test involving opinions, and faith in Christ.

The fact is that the very liberal conditions for admission into Wesley's Society referred simply to the initial admission, just as we have very light requirements for admission on probation, or, as they now say, into "preparatory membership." Beyond that, Wesley and The Methodist Episcopal Church have been very strict in regard to doctrinal matters, for what is regarded as "full membership." Wesley had a stage, or stages, beyond the initial admission, where there were additional rights and privileges. For this advancement Wesley demands more than he asked

at the beginning.[1] Then it is to be remembered that Wesley's Society at that time was not a church.

It is simply absurd to say that Wesley cared nothing for religious opinions, or doctrines, when he was the man who prepared the Articles of Religion for his followers, not simply copying pre-existing Articles of Religion, but making a re-study and a revision of old Articles by elimination and modification, so that they said something different from the old forms, and while they had a heritage from a noble past they were essentially new Articles for a new development of the church.

The author would eliminate the Articles of Religion. As he says, "We will have to swing away from that monument of Anglo-Saxon Protestantism."[2]

Well, even the Articles of the Church of England and certain formularies of Continental Protestantism, he would speak of as a mere monument, but they are more than a monument. They still live with power, while Wesley's Articles cannot be fairly classified as a mere "monument of Anglo-Saxon Protestantism." Centuries had passed since the Anglo-Saxon times, and a new and vitalizing breath had breathed on those Wesley had prepared. Yet the author says: "It will probably be possible to make men swear that they believe in the doctrines set forth in those Articles

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[1]Bishop Thomas B. Neely, *The Only Condition;* and Bishop Thomas B. Neely: *Doctrinal Standards of Methodism.*

[2]*The Next Step,* p. 95.

for years to come. But to what purpose? The fact is not altered that those Articles are utterly foreign to the spirit and genius and understanding of the Chinese Christian.'"[1]

Now, as a matter of fact, all Christianity is "foreign to the spirit and genius and understanding" of the heathen mind; and if missions in foreign and pagan countries are to omit all that is Christian because the people find it difficult to comprehend Christianity, the mission will have no Christian mission to heathen people. However, it is known that peoples, once non-Christian, have learned to understand, and have intelligently accepted the religion of the Christ. The Chinese and Indian mind can do the same. Then he makes his fling at "the recitation of the Apostles' Creed," which he styles "another exotic," which he seems to forget Wesley accepted and incorporated in the formularies of Methodism, and which was placed under the constitutional protection of The Methodist Episcopal Church. If the author takes a casual remark of John Wesley, and cites the detached remark as against creed or doctrine, why does he spurn the deliberate formulations and indorsement of the same Wesley? This is inconsistent treatment of Wesley, and is as unfair as inconsistent.

The author's aim seems to be to make a church that will be very unlike The Methodist Episcopal Church, and from his indefinite statements one may well wonder what kind of a church it will be,

[1] *The Next Step* p. 97.

and, particularly what kind of a Christian church it can be. With his discarding of historic and established creeds, he leaves things uncertain and chaotic in the mind of his reader, and, even if it is not absolutely and certainly bad, it must seem that a creedless church would be a spineless church.

What kind of a Methodist Episcopal Church would be left? The title might remain, but what else? With the Apostles' Creed put in the discard, with the Articles of Religion gone, and the Methodistic services abandoned, who would think it was a Methodist Episcopal Church? Unfortunately, there is no definite assurance that anything as good would come out of this indefinite project.

That he meditates elimination and probable destruction of many historic and established things seems quite clear, for, touching "the precedent of holding every part of a church, wherever located, to a conformance with the doctrinal expressions and forms in every other part," he says: "Increasingly I am convinced that the successful democratic world church will have to break the trammels of this tradition." But this is something more than a mere tradition, and a church organization implies a common constitution to which all must conform. If he wants the foreign missions to be doctrinally different he cannot have that in an organized world church, that is really a church with a Constitution, and he cannot have it under the present church organization. A

church must have one constitution for all and cannot have different parts holding different vital doctrines in opposition.

These assertions make not for a world church, which implies one government, but for separation and independence that will permit the mission in every country to differ from every other part and each mission to have whatever it wants in church order, church service, and religious doctrine. It thus provides for its own disruption. Surely, he does not expect The Methodist Episcopal Church to be responsible for these un-Methodistic changes, and for the resulting evolution or devolution of the foreign missions. If this should be "The Next Step," it seems perfectly plain that it would be a false step.

The author asserts that The Methodist Episcopal Church is heading toward an international organization, and that "Apparently The Methodist Episcopal Church is committed to a development as an international entity."[1] With that we cannot agree, for the church has not definitely and legally said so; but, if this be so or if persons are trying to bring this about, then preachers and people will do well to be alarmed, for the liberties of the church are in danger.

That would mean a world-wide aggregation of power which would result in a loss of local and general freedom through an increase of power at the center, which might be a shifting center, and a steady diminution of the proportionate repre-

[1] *The Next Step*, p. 21.

sentation, and, also, at the same time, in a serious confusion, growing out of developing differences in the various countries, which would result in internal conflicts which would tend to the disintegration of the combination, and, perhaps to a collapse of the work itself.

The mother church would be endangered, first, because of the evils which would be evolved at the seat of the centralized ecclesiastical power; and, secondly, because, sooner or later, it would be affected injuriously by the heterogeneous forces in, and exerted by the growing churches in distant lands; while the indigenous churches in the many countries, made up of different races with different languages and different histories, would find their racial or national individuality interfered with, and the ultimate tendency would be to break away from each other, and to form independent and, perhaps, inharmonious national churches.

A world-wide international church organization would be a danger ending in disaster. It cannot solve the problems arising out of distance, differences in peoples, and nationalistic feelings which naturally long for independence, and rebel against submersion in a government under other peoples.

The author at times seems to argue this way, and reiterates his declaration that: "It is impossible for anybody to legislate intelligently for the life of a church half a world away."[1]

That is in harmony with Bishop Asbury's state-

[1] *The Next Step*, p. 59.

ment that Wesley, three thousand miles away, could not administer Methodism in America. In this particular the author stands on firm ground, but it carries with it an implication, which is clearly against his idea of a world-wide, or international church. If the church in the United States is too far away to "legislate intelligently" for China, India, or Africa, then China, India, and Africa, and other countries, are too far away to legislate for the church in the United States, and the idea of a world-wide international ecclesiastical government involves a false principle and is unworkable.

The question the author raises is: "How are the parts of the church that have grown up continents distant from the original 'home' to be freed from long distance control and given the shaping of their own destiny? The demands of efficiency—to consider the subject on no higher level—require that such a change shall speedily come. It is impossible for any body to legislate intelligently for the life of a church half a world away.'"[1]

If this is correct, and there is force in the question and in the statement based upon it, a world-wide international church does not meet the difficulty. The countries and places still exist, and are supposed to be in this ecclesiastical international, and the great distances remain just the same, and each mission continues to be under the control of ecclesiastical bodies that continue to

[1] *The Next Step*, pp. 58, 59.

be "half a world away," and the mission is not free from distant power and from government by distant and different people. The only thing that will free the mission "from long distance control" and give the missions "the shaping of their own destiny," is to give the mission and the missions governmental independence.

It is absurd to think that a body can be in a world-wide international church, with a common government over all, and yet that each individual body shall be under no control, but be absolutely free to do as it pleases. Under the common government all are governed, and no part can be entirely independent. If all in the combination have no respect for the international government, and all are doing as they please, and are doing differently, then there is no common government but governmental chaos.

The world-wide church would not free any part "from long distance control," and if all the variations and contradictions that have been suggested were made actual, evidently it must not be expected that the mother church shall continue responsible for what the distant body does, while, on the principle of freedom from "long distance control," the mother church in the United States must withdraw from all governmental relation. On the theory presented, it would be too far away, and all would be too far from each other.

Further, it is just as logical that the distant and self-governing body shall not have any control over the mother church, by delegation or other-

wise. The distant body is just as far away from the mother church as the mother church is distant from it, and as he says: "It is impossible for any body to legislate intelligently for the life of a church half a world away." If the distant mission should have self-control, and not be governed by the mother church, then the mother church should have self-control and the mission in the foreign country should not in any degree, or in any way, control the home church.

Bishop Thoburn, in 1884, when he was Doctor James M. Thoburn, declared that the mother church in the United States, could not legislate for the foreign missions, and that they should have home rule. Logically, that meant they should have independence, but, if each mission were independent, there could not be a world-wide church with the missions and the home church in it, for to have a world church there must be a common government covering all to hold the parts together.

Then it is plain that The Methodist Episcopal Church could not be in a world-wide ecclesiastical combination without loss and injury in the combine. If it did not control the parts, the parts would control it, and, if it were controlled by the organizations in other countries, many of them thousands of miles, or half a world away, the mother church in the United States would be modified by them, and through the control of those in the foreign lands, the mother church would cease to be an American church, and would lose its real

independence. This would be one of the consequences of becoming a world church.

The author's idea of a world-wide church would sink The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America from its chief and independent position to a merely sectional part of the international scheme, and this he concedes when he proposes "A Central Conference for the United States." In other words it would mean that the great Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, the creator of the foreign missions, would drop down to the level of a "Central Mission Conference," in an uncertain international medley that it would cease to control, but which would control it.

This would not only change the American nature of The Methodist Episcopal Church, but, as he reveals, that the international idea would carry the General Conference out of the United States of America and into remote parts of the proposed world church, and, so, referring to the General Conference, the author says: "It will not be restricted to meeting in the United States, for it represents a *world* body."[1]

One may easily imagine the lack of unity and the possibility of conflict in such a world-wide scheme. It makes it possible for the thirty countries, more or less, each having what it wants and doing as it likes, to make the world church, or international church, a conglomerate of confusion without any reliable cohesion. To consider The

[1] *The Next Step*, p. 101.

Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States as responsible for such a composite of possible, and probable contradictions would be the height of absurdity, and could only be possible through a pronounced degree of ignorance, recklessness, or insanity.

Another important fact should be considered, namely, that sooner or later the world church would overwhelm the mother church in the United States of America. As the outlying missions in thirty or fifty nations grow they tend to a numerical preponderance. The author perceives that when he says: "I think it altogether likely that before the end of this century there will be many more members of The Methodist Episcopal Church outside than inside the borders of the United States."[1]

On his own showing, the international church, with the home church in it, means the submerging of The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, and that event would not be far away, for a single human life can span from the present to "the end of this century." What an unwieldy body the international world-wide church would be long before that time, anyone may easily see.

Internationalism may seem to be a fine sentiment for the theorizer, but it is a danger in the church as well as in the state. We may love our neighbor, but we cannot abandon our identity or our individuality, and individuality has its place

[1] *The Next Step*, p. 115.

among the nations and churches, as well as among persons.

The world may be relatively small, but it is too large for only one government, either political or ecclesiastical. We must remember the immensity of population and the stretch of geographic distances, we must remember the differences of race and history, and everywhere the distinction between native and foreigner, and, in addition, the natural desire of every people to govern themselves. These things prove the hopelessness of having one government for the whole world.

The case for self-government in foreign missions has great strength, and the local extent of the government may be determined by race, by environment or by national history.

In this matter the original mother church must have careful consideration. With increasing and spreading foreign missions in many parts of the world, the burden continues to become heavier. As the missions become independent the burden may be shifted.

To combine present and prospective foreign missions in a complex international ecclesiasticism, even with the mother church in it, would not relieve the home church but would add to its burdens and multiply its dangers, while for the missions themselves the arrangement, because of nationalistic aspirations, and differences of blood, of training and history, could not have a permanent and beneficial result.

The true plan is for each mission to have self-

government and independence, and to have the living influence of the mother church go out to each and all, and hold them in affiliation as with a moral bond, and at the same time aid them in various ways, even giving its money under judicious conditions, as from time to time may be deemed best.

We have had, and now have, The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, with missions in foreign lands. As such it is a distinct and independent entity, and this distinctness and independence of this American church must be preserved, no matter what may happen to other bodies, but its true status cannot be preserved if it is plunged into an international world church, or controlled or limited in any way or degree by the people of other lands.

The mother church need not expect to continue in perpetual control of peoples of other races and nationalities in distant lands who have as much right to be independent as the Christian Church in any land, and, on the other hand the people of those lands should not seek to control the church in America, in any way or any degree, and the mother church should not permit any force to plunge her into an international whirlpool, or to take from her any portion of her independence.

The next step should not be a false step, for a false step at this time may be disastrous. Another false step may be into a quicksand. If wrong steps have been taken, then the church must halt

and at once get back into the right path. Another false step may result in a catastrophe.

The right course is to preserve The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America as an absolutely independent American church, and at the same time to send the gospel "into all the world."

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